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Lockhart's Life of
**SIR WALTER
SCOTT**

Edited by
J. M. SLOAN

Abridged and Newly Edited

HUTCHINSON

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The Library of Standard Biographies

LOCKHART'S

LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT

ABRIDGED AND EDITED BY J. M. SLOAN

COMMENDATORY

THE WAVERLEY NOVELS

"What a power is that of genius! What a world of thought and feeling is thus rescued from oblivion! How many hours of heartfelt satisfaction has our author given to the gay and thoughtless! How many sad hearts has he soothed in pain and solitude! It is no wonder that the public repay with lengthened applause and gratitude the pleasure they receive. He writes as fast as they can read, and he does not write himself down. He is always in the public eye, and we do not tire of him. His worst is better than other people's best. . . . His works (taken together) are almost like a new edition of human nature. This is indeed to be an author!"—WILLIAM HAZLITT, *The Spirit of the Age*, 1825.

WALTER SCOTT'S STYLE

. . . "Observe Scott's habit of looking at nature neither as dead, or merely material, in the way that Homer regards it, not as altered by his own feelings, in the way that Keats and Tennyson regard it, but as having an animation and pathos of its own, wholly irrespective of human presence or passion—an animation which Scott loves and sympathises with as he would with a fellow creature."—JOHN RUSKIN, *Modern Painters*, vol. iii.

LOCKHART'S "LIFE OF SCOTT"

"He [Lockhart] had admirable materials in Scott's letters and journals, but he turned them to such account that the biography may safely be described as, next to Boswell's 'Johnson,' the best in the language."—SIR LESLIE STEPHEN in *The Dictionary of National Biography*.



From the picture by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.


Walbyford

THE LIFE OF
Sir Walter Scott

BY
JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART

ABRIDGED, AND NEWLY
EDITED, WITH NOTES, ETC.

London : **HUTCHINSON & CO.**
Paternoster Row   1904



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PREFACE

WHEN in May, 1847, the publisher of Sir Walter Scott's *Works* proposed to take to himself the whole remaining Copyright in them, he stipulated that I should prepare an abridgment of the *Memoirs* of the author, originally comprised in seven volumes, and since reprinted in various forms. If I had been to consult my own feelings, I should have been more willing to produce an enlarged edition ; for the interest of Sir Walter's history lies, I think, even peculiarly, in its minute details—especially in the details set down by himself in his letters and diaries ; and, of course, after the lapse of ten years, more copious use might be made of those materials without offence or indecorum. Mr. Cadell, however, considered that a book of smaller bulk, embracing only what may be called more strictly narrative, might be acceptable to certain classes of readers : and the manner in which this gentleman had throughout conducted himself towards Sir Walter, his family, and his memory—together with other circumstances on which it is not necessary to say more—overcame my reluctance.

It will be understood that whenever the narrative now given at all differs from that of the larger book, I have been endeavouring to profit by letters recently communicated.

J. G. L.

[1848.]

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LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT

CHAPTER I

MEMOIR OF HIS EARLY YEARS, WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

Ashestiel, April 26th, 1808.

THE present age has discovered a desire, or rather a rage, for literary anecdote and private history, that may be well permitted to alarm one who has engaged in a certain degree the attention of the public. That I have had more than my own share of popularity, my contemporaries will be as ready to admit as I am to confess that its measure has exceeded not only my hopes, but my merits, and even wishes. I may be therefore permitted, without an extraordinary degree of vanity, to take the precaution of recording a few leading circumstances (they do not merit the name of events) of a very quiet and uniform life—that, should my literary reputation survive my temporal existence, the public may know from good authority all that they are entitled to know of an individual who has contributed to their amusement.

From the lives of some poets a most important moral lesson may doubtless be derived, and few sermons can be read with so much profit as the memoirs of Burns, of Chatterton, or of Savage. Were I conscious of anything peculiar in my own moral character which could render such development necessary or useful, I would as readily consent to it as I would bequeath my body to dissection, if the operation could tend to point out the nature and the means of curing any peculiar malady. But as my habits of thinking and acting, as well as my rank in society, were fixed long before I had attained,

or even pretended to, any poetical reputation, and as it produced, when acquired, no remarkable change upon either, it is hardly to be expected that much information can be derived from minutely investigated frailties, follies, or vices, not very different in number or degree from those of other men in my situation. As I have not been blessed with the talents of Burns or Chatterton, I have been happily exempted from the influence of their violent passions, exasperated by the struggle of feelings which rose up against the unjust decrees of fortune. Yet, although I cannot tell of difficulties vanquished, and distance of rank annihilated by the strength of genius, those who shall hereafter read this little memoir may find in it some hints to be improved, for the regulation of their own minds, or the training those of others.

Every Scottishman has a pedigree. It is a national prerogative, as unalienable as his pride and his poverty. My birth was neither distinguished nor sordid. According to the prejudices of my country, it was esteemed *gentle*, as I was connected, though remotely, with ancient families both by my father's and mother's side. My father's grandfather was Walter Scott, well known in Teviotdale by the surname of *Beardie*. He was the second son of Walter Scott, first Laird of Raeburn, who was third son of Sir William Scott, and the grandson of Walter Scott, commonly called in tradition *Auld Watt* of Harden. I am therefore lineally descended from that ancient chieftain, whose name I have made to ring in many a ditty, and from his fair dame, the Flower of Yarrow—no bad genealogy for a Border minstrel. *Beardie*, my great-grandfather aforesaid, derived his cognomen from a venerable beard, which he wore unblemished by razor or scissors, in token of his regret for the banished dynasty of Stuart. It would have been well that his zeal had stopped there. But he took arms, and intrigued in their cause, until he lost all he had in the world, and, as I have heard, ran a narrow risk of being hanged, had it not been for the interference of Anne, Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth. *Beardie's* elder brother, William Scott of Raeburn, my great-granduncle, was killed about the age of twenty-one, in a duel with Pringle of Crichton, grandfather of the present Mark Pringle of Clifton. They fought with swords, as was the fashion of the time, in a field near Selkirk, called from the catastrophe the *Raeburn Meadowspot*. Pringle fled from Scotland to Spain, and was long a captive and slave in Barbary. *Beardie* became, of course, *Tutor of Raeburn*, as the old Scottish phrase called him—that

is, guardian to his infant nephew, father of the present Walter Scott of Raeburn. He also managed the estates of Makerstoun, being nearly related to that family by his mother, Isabel Mac-Dougal. I suppose he had some allowance for his care in either case, and subsisted upon that and the fortune which he had by his wife, a Miss Campbell of Silvercraigs, in the west, through which connexion my father used to *call cousin*, as they say, with the Campbells of Blythswood. Beardie was a man of some learning, and a friend of Dr. Pitcairn, to whom his politics probably made him acceptable. They had a Tory or Jacobite club in Edinburgh, in which the conversation is said to have been maintained in Latin.

He left three sons. The eldest, Walter, had a family, of which any that now remain have been long settled in America : —the male heirs are long since extinct. The third was William, father of James Scott, well known in India as one of the original settlers of Prince of Wales Island. The second, Robert Scott, was my grandfather. He was originally bred to the sea ; but, being shipwrecked near Dundee in his trial-voyage, he took such a sincere dislike to that element, that he could not be persuaded to a second attempt. This occasioned a quarrel between him and his father, who left him to shift for himself. Robert was one of those active spirits to whom this was no misfortune. He turned Whig upon the spot, and fairly abjured his father's politics, and his learned poverty. His chief and relative, Mr. Scott of Harden, gave him a lease of the farm of Sandy-Knowe, comprehending the rocks in the centre of which Smailholm or Sandy-Knowe Tower is situated. He took for his shepherd an old man called Hogg, who willingly lent him, out of respect to his family, his whole savings, about £30, to stock the new farm. With this sum, which it seems was at the time sufficient for the purpose, the master and servant set off to purchase a stock of sheep at Whitsun-Tryste, a fair held on a hill near Wooler in Northumberland. The old shepherd went carefully from drove to drove, till he found a *hirsel* likely to answer their purpose, and then returned to tell his master to come up and conclude the bargain. But what was his surprise to see him galloping a mettled hunter about the race-course, and to find he had expended the whole stock in this extraordinary purchase !—Moses's bargain of green spectacles did not strike more dismay into the Vicar of Wakefield's family, than my grandfather's rashness into the poor old shepherd. The thing, however, was irretrievable, and they returned without the sheep. In the

course of a few days, however, my grandfather, who was one of the best horsemen of his time, attended John Scott of Harden's hounds on this same horse, and displayed him to such advantage that he sold him for double the original price. The farm was now stocked in earnest; and the rest of my grandfather's career was that of successful industry. He was one of the first who were active in the cattle trade, afterwards carried to such extent between the Highlands of Scotland and the leading counties in England, and by his droving transactions acquired a considerable sum of money. He was a man of middle stature, extremely active, quick, keen, and fiery in his temper, stubbornly honest, and so distinguished for his skill in county matters, that he was the general referee in all points of dispute which occurred in the neighbourhood. His birth being admitted as *gentle*, gave him access to the best society in the county, and his dexterity in country sports, particularly hunting, made him an acceptable companion in the field as well as at the table.

Robert Scott of Sandy-Knowe married, in 1728, Barbara Haliburton, daughter of Thomas Haliburton of Newmains, an ancient and respectable family in Berwickshire. Among other patrimonial possessions, they enjoyed the part of Dryburgh, now the property of the Earl of Buchan, comprehending the ruins of the Abbey. My granduncle, Robert Haliburton, having no male heirs, this estate, as well as the representation of the family, would have devolved upon my father, and indeed old Newmains had settled it upon him; but this was prevented by the misfortunes of my granduncle, a weak, silly man, who engaged in trade, for which he had neither stock nor talents, and became bankrupt. The ancient patrimony was sold for a trifle (about £3,000), and my father, who might have purchased it with ease, was dissuaded by my grandfather, who at that time believed a more advantageous purchase might have been made of some lands which Raeburn thought of selling. And thus we have nothing left of Dryburgh, although my father's maternal inheritance, but the right of stretching our bones where mine may perhaps be laid ere any eye but my own glances over these pages.

Walter Scott, my father, was born in 1729, and educated to the profession of a Writer to the Signet. He was the eldest of a large family, several of whom I shall have occasion to mention with a tribute of sincere gratitude. My father was a singular instance of a man rising to eminence in a profession for which nature had in some degree unfitted him. He had indeed a turn

for labour, and a pleasure in analyzing the abstruse feudal doctrines connected with conveyancing, which would probably have rendered him unrivalled in the line of a special pleader, had there been such a profession in Scotland; but in the actual business of the profession which he embraced, in that sharp and intuitive perception which is necessary in driving bargains for himself and others, in availing himself of the wants, necessities, caprices, and follies of some, and guarding against the knavery and malice of others, Uncle Toby himself could not have conducted himself with more simplicity than my father. Most attorneys have been suspected, more or less justly, of making their own fortune at the expense of their clients—my father's fate was to vindicate his calling from the stain in one instance, for in many cases his clients contrived to ease him of considerable sums. Many worshipful and be-knighted names occur to my memory, who did him the honour to run in his debt to the amount of thousands, and to pay him with a lawsuit, or a commission of bankruptcy, as the case happened. But they are gone to a different accounting, and it would be ungenerous to visit their disgrace upon their descendants. My father was wont also to give openings, to those who were pleased to take them, to pick a quarrel with him. He had a zeal for his clients which was almost ludicrous: far from coldly discharging the duties of his employment towards them, he thought for them, felt for their honour as for his own, and rather risked disobliging them than neglecting anything to which he conceived their duty bound them. If there was an old mother or aunt to be maintained, he was, I am afraid, too apt to administer to their necessities from what the young heir had destined exclusively to his pleasures. This ready discharge of obligations which the civilians tell us are only natural and not legal, did not, I fear, recommend him to his employers. Yet his practice was, at one period of his life, very extensive. He understood his business theoretically, and was early introduced to it by a partnership with George Chalmers, Writer to the Signet, under whom he had served his apprenticeship.

His person and face were uncommonly handsome, with an expression of sweetness of temper, which was not fallacious; his manners were rather formal, but full of genuine kindness, especially when exercising the duties of hospitality. His general habits were not only temperate, but severely abstemious; but upon a festival occasion, there were few whom a moderate glass of wine exhilarated to such a lively degree. His religion, in

which he was devoutly sincere, was Calvinism of the strictest kind, and his favourite study related to church history. I suspect the good old man was often engaged with Knox and Spottiswoode's folios, when, immured in his solitary room, he was supposed to be immersed in professional researches. In his political principles he was a steady friend to freedom, with a bias, however, to the monarchical part of our Constitution, which he considered as peculiarly exposed to danger during the later years of his life. He had much of ancient Scottish prejudice respecting the forms of marriages, funerals, christenings, and so forth, and was always vexed at any neglect of etiquette upon such occasions. As his education had not been upon an enlarged plan, it could not be expected that he should be an enlightened scholar, but he had not passed through a busy life without observation; and his remarks upon times and manners often exhibited strong traits of practical though untaught philosophy. Let me conclude this sketch, which I am unconscious of having overcharged, with a few lines written by the late Mrs. Cockburn upon the subject. They made one among a set of poetical characters which were given as toasts among a few friends, and we must hold them to contain a striking likeness, since the original was recognised so soon as they were read aloud:—

“To a thing that's uncommon—a youth of discretion,
 Who, though vastly handsome, despises flirtation:
 To the friend in affliction, the heart of affection,
 Who may hear the last trump without dread of detection.”

In April, 1758, my father married Anne Rutherford, eldest daughter of Dr. John Rutherford, professor of medicine in the University of Edinburgh. He was one of those pupils of Boerhaave, to whom the school of medicine in our northern metropolis owes its rise, and a man distinguished for professional talent, for lively wit, and for literary acquirements. Dr. Rutherford was twice married. His first wife, of whom my mother is the sole surviving child, was a daughter of Sir John Swinton of Swinton, a family which produced many distinguished warriors during the middle ages, and which, for antiquity and honourable alliances, may rank with any in Britain. My grandfather's second wife was Miss Mackay, by whom he had a second family, of whom are now (1808) alive, Dr. Daniel Rutherford, Professor of Botany in the University of Edinburgh, and Misses Janet and Christian Rutherford, amiable and accomplished women.

My father and mother had a very numerous family, no fewer, I believe, than twelve children, of whom many were highly

promising, though only five survived very early youth. My eldest brother Robert was bred in the king's service, and was in most of Rodney's battles. His temper was bold and haughty, and to me was often checkered with what I felt to be capricious tyranny. In other respects I loved him much, for he had a strong turn for literature, read poetry with taste and judgment, and composed verses himself, which had gained him great applause among his messmates. Witness the following elegy upon the supposed loss of the vessel, composed the night before Rodney's celebrated battle of April 12th, 1782. It alludes to the various amusements of his mess:—

“No more the geese shall cackle on the poop,
 No more the bagpipe through the orlop sound,
 No more the midshipmen, a jovial group,
 Shall toast the girls, and push the bottle round.
 In death's dark road at anchor fast they stay,
 Till Heaven's loud signal shall in thunder roar;
 Then starting up, all hands shall quick obey,
 Sheet home the topsail, and with speed unmoor.”

Robert sang agreeably (a virtue which was never seen in me), understood the mechanical arts, and when in good humour, could regale us with many a tale of bold adventure and narrow escapes. When in bad humour, however, he gave us a practical taste of what was then man-of-war's discipline, and kicked and cuffed without mercy. I have often thought how he might have distinguished himself had he continued in the navy until the present times, so glorious for nautical exploit. But the peace of 1783 cut off all hopes of promotion for those who had not great interest; and some disgust which his proud spirit had taken at harsh usage from a superior officer, combined to throw poor Robert into the East-India Company's service, for which his habits were ill adapted. He made two voyages to the East, and died a victim to the climate.

John Scott, my second brother, is about three years older than me. He addicted himself to the military service, and is now brevet-major in the 73rd regiment.

I had an only sister, Anne Scott, who seemed to be from her cradle the butt for mischance to shoot arrows at. Her childhood was marked by perilous escapes from the most extraordinary accidents. Among others, I remember an iron-railed door leading into the area in the centre of George's Square being closed by the wind, while her fingers were betwixt the hasp and staple. Her hand was thus locked in, and must have been smashed to pieces, had not the bones of her fingers been remark-

ably slight and thin. As it was, the hand was cruelly mangled. On another occasion, she was nearly drowned in a pond, or old quarry-hole, in what was then called Brown's Park, on the south side of the square. But the most unfortunate accident, and which, though it happened while she was only six years old, proved the remote cause of her death, was her cap accidentally taking fire. The child was alone in the room, and before assistance could be obtained, her head was dreadfully scorched. After a lingering and dangerous illness, she recovered—but never to enjoy perfect health. The slightest cold occasioned swellings in her face, and other indications of a delicate constitution. At length [in 1801], poor Anne was taken ill, and died after a very short interval. Her temper, like that of her brothers, was peculiar, and in her, perhaps, it showed more odd, from the habits of indulgence which her nervous illness had formed. But she was at heart an affectionate and kind girl, neither void of talent nor of feeling, though living in an ideal world which she had framed to herself by the force of imagination. Anne was my junior by about a year.

A year lower in the list was my brother Thomas Scott, who is still alive.

Last, and most unfortunate of our family, was my youngest brother, Daniel. With the same aversion to labour, or, rather, I should say, the same determined indolence that marked us all, he had neither the vivacity of intellect which supplies the want of diligence, nor the pride which renders the most detested labour better than dependence or contempt. His career was as unfortunate as might be augured from such an unhappy combination; and, after various unsuccessful attempts to establish himself in life, he died on his return from the West Indies, in July, 1806.

Having premised so much of my family, I return to my own story. I was born, as I believe, on August 15th, 1771, in a house belonging to my father, at the head of the College Wynd. It was pulled down, with others, to make room for the northern front of the new college. I was an uncommonly healthy child, but had nearly died in consequence of my first nurse being ill of a consumption, a circumstance which she chose to conceal, though to do so was murder to both herself and me. She went privately to consult Dr. Black, the celebrated professor of chemistry, who put my father on his guard. The woman was dismissed, and I was consigned to a healthy peasant, who is still alive to boast of her *laddie* being what she calls a *grand gentleman*. I showed

every sign of health and strength until I was about eighteen months old. One night, I have been often told, I showed great reluctance to be caught and put to bed ; and after being chased about the room, was apprehended and consigned to my dormitory with some difficulty. It was the last time I was to show such personal agility. In the morning I was discovered to be affected with the fever which often accompanies the cutting of large teeth. It held me three days. On the fourth, when they went to bathe me as usual, they discovered that I had lost the power of my right leg. My grandfather, an excellent anatomist as well as physician, the late worthy Alexander Wood, and many others of the most respectable of the faculty, were consulted. There appeared to be no dislocation or sprain ; blisters and other topical remedies were applied in vain. When the efforts of regular physicians had been exhausted, without the slightest success, my anxious parents, during the course of many years, eagerly grasped at every prospect of cure which was held out by the promise of empirics, or of ancient ladies or gentlemen who conceived themselves entitled to recommend various remedies, some of which were of a nature sufficiently singular. But the advice of my grandfather, Dr. Rutherford, that I should be sent to reside in the country, to give the chance of natural exertion excited by free air and liberty, was first resorted to ; and before I have the recollection of the slightest event, I was, agreeably to this friendly counsel, an inmate in the farmhouse of Sandy-Knowe.

An odd incident is worth recording. It seems my mother had sent a maid to take charge of me, that I might be no inconvenience in the family. But the damsel sent on that important mission had left her heart behind her, in the keeping of some wild fellow, it is likely, who had done and said more to her than he was like to make good. She became extremely desirous to return to Edinburgh, and as my mother made a point of her remaining where she was, she contracted a sort of hatred at poor me, as the cause of her being detained at Sandy-Knowe. This rose, I suppose, to a sort of delirious affection, for she confessed to old Alison Wilson, the housekeeper, that she had carried me up to the Craigs, meaning, under a strong temptation of the devil, to cut my throat with her scissors, and bury me in the moss. Alison instantly took possession of my person, and took care that her confidant should not be subject to any further temptation, so far as I was concerned. She was dismissed, of course, and I have heard became afterwards a lunatic.

It is here at Sandy-Knowe, in the residence of my paternal grandfather, already mentioned, that I have the first consciousness of existence ; and I recollect distinctly that my situation and appearance were a little whimsical. Among the odd remedies recurred to to aid my lameness, some one had recommended, that so often as a sheep was killed for the use of the family, I should be stripped, and swathed up in the skin, warm as it was flayed from the carcase of the animal. In this Tartar-like habiliment I well remember lying upon the floor of the little parlour in the farmhouse, while my grandfather, a venerable old man with white hair, used every excitement to make me try to crawl. I also distinctly remember the late Sir George MacDougal of Mackerstoun, father of the present Sir Henry Hay MacDougal, joining in this kindly attempt. He was, God knows how, a relation of ours, and I still recollect him in his old-fashioned military habit (he had been colonel of the Greys), with a small cocked hat, deeply laced, an embroidered scarlet waistcoat, and a light-coloured coat, with milk-white locks tied in a military fashion, kneeling on the ground before me, and dragging his watch along the carpet to induce me to follow it. The benevolent old soldier and the infant wrapped in his sheepskin would have afforded an odd group to uninterested spectators. This must have happened about my third year, for Sir George MacDougal and my grandfather both died shortly after that period.

My grandmother continued for some years to take charge of the farm, assisted by my father's second brother, Mr. Thomas Scott, who resided at Crailing, as factor or land-steward for Mr. Scott at Danesfield, then proprietor of that estate. This was during the heat of the American war, and I remember being as anxious on my uncle's weekly visits (for we heard news at no other time) to hear of the defeat of Washington, as if I had had some deep and personal cause of antipathy to him. I know not how this was combined with a very strong prejudice in favour of the Stuart family, which I had originally imbibed from the songs and tales of the Jacobites. This latter political propensity was deeply confirmed by the stories told in my hearing of the cruelties exercised in the executions at Carlisle, and in the Highlands, after the battle of Culloden. One or two of our own distant relations had fallen on that occasion, and I remember of detesting the name of Cumberland with more than infant hatred. Mr. Curle, farmer at Yetbyre, husband of one of my aunts, had been present at their execution ; and it was probably from him that I first heard these tragic tales which made so great an im-

pression on me. The local information, which I conceive had some share in forming my future taste and pursuits, I derived from the old songs and tales which then formed the amusement of a retired country family. My grandmother, in whose youth the old Border depredations were matter of recent tradition, used to tell me many a tale of Watt of Harden, Wight Willie of Aikwood, Jamie Telfer of the fair Dodhead, and other heroes, —merrymen all of the persuasion and calling of Robin Hood and Little John. A more recent hero, but not of less note, was the celebrated *Diel of Littledean*, whom she well remembered, as he had married her mother's sister. Of this extraordinary person I learned many a story, grave and gay, comic and warlike. Two or three old books which lay in the window-seat were explored for my amusement in the tedious winter days. *Automathes*, and Ramsay's *Tea-table Miscellany*, were my favourites, although at a later period an odd volume of *Josephus's Wars of the Jews* divided my partiality.

My kind and affectionate aunt, Miss Janet Scott, whose memory will ever be dear to me, used to read these works to me with admirable patience, until I could repeat long passages by heart. The ballad of Hardyknute I was early master of, to the great annoyance of almost our only visitor, the worthy clergyman of the parish, Dr. Duncan, who had not patience to have a sober chat interrupted by my shouting forth this ditty. Methinks I now see his tall, thin, emaciated figure, his legs cased in clasped gambadoes, and his face of a length that would have rivalled the Knight of La Mancha's, and hear him exclaiming, "One may as well speak in the mouth of a cannon as where that child is." With this little acidity, which was natural to him, he was a most excellent and benevolent man, a gentleman in every feeling, and altogether different from those of his order who cringe at the tables of the gentry, or domineer and riot at those of the yeomanry. In his youth he had been chaplain in the family of Lord Marchmont—had seen Pope—and could talk familiarly of many characters who had survived the Augustan age of Queen Anne. Though valetudinary, he lived to be nearly ninety, and to welcome to Scotland his son, Colonel William Duncan, who, with the highest character for military and civil merit, had made a considerable fortune in India. In [1795], a few days before his death, I paid him a visit, to inquire after his health. I found him emaciated to the last degree, wrapped in a tartan night-gown, and employed with all the activity of health and youth in correcting a history of the Revolution, which he intended should be

given to the public when he was no more. He read me several passages with a voice naturally strong, and which the feelings of an author then raised above the depression of age and declining health. I begged him to spare this fatigue, which could not but injure his health. His answer was remarkable, "I know," he said, "that I cannot survive a fortnight—and what signifies an exertion that can at worst only accelerate my death a few days?" I marvelled at the composure of this reply, for his appearance sufficiently vouched the truth of his prophecy, and rode home to my uncle's (then my abode), musing what there could be in the spirit of authorship that could inspire its votaries with the courage of martyrs. He died within less than the period he assigned—with which event I close my digression.

I was in my fourth year when my father was advised that the Bath waters might be of some advantage to my lameness. My affectionate aunt, although such a journey promised to a person of her retired habits anything but pleasure or amusement, undertook as readily to accompany me to the wells of Bladud, as if she had expected all the delight that ever the prospect of a watering-place held out to its most impatient visitants. My health was by this time a good deal confirmed by the country air, and the influence of that imperceptible and unfatiguing exercise to which the good sense of my grandfather had subjected me; for when the day was fine, I was usually carried out and laid down beside the old shepherd, among the crags or rocks round which he fed his sheep. The impatience of a child soon inclined me to struggle with my infirmity, and I began by degrees to stand, to walk, and to run. Although the limb affected was much shrunk and contracted, my general health, which was of more importance, was much strengthened by being frequently in the open air; and, in a word, I who in a city had probably been condemned to hopeless and helpless decrepitude, was now a healthy, high-spirited and, my lameness apart, a sturdy child—*non sine diis animosus infans*.

We went to London by sea, and it may gratify the curiosity of minute biographers to learn that our voyage was performed in *The Duchess of Buccleuch*, Captain Beatson, master. At London we made a short stay, and saw some of the common shows exhibited to strangers. When, twenty-five years afterwards, I visited the Tower of London and Westminster Abbey, I was astonished to find how accurate my recollections of these celebrated places of visitation proved to be, and I have ever

since trusted more implicitly to my juvenile reminiscences. At Bath, where I lived about a year, I went through all the usual discipline of the pump-room and baths, but I believe without the least advantage to my lameness. During my residence at Bath, I acquired the rudiments of reading at a day-school, kept by an old dame near our lodgings, and I had never a more regular teacher, although I think I did not attend her a quarter of a year. An occasional lesson from my aunt supplied the rest. Afterwards, when grown a big boy, I had a few lessons from Mr. Stalker of Edinburgh, and finally from the Rev. Mr. Cleeve. But I never acquired a just pronounciation, nor could I read with much propriety.

In other respects my residence at Bath is marked by very pleasing recollections. The venerable John Home, author of *Douglas*, was then at the watering-place, and paid much attention to my aunt and to me. His wife, who has survived him, was then an invalid, and used to take the air in her carriage on the Downs, when I was often invited to accompany her. But the most delightful recollections of Bath are dated after the arrival of my uncle, Captain Robert Scott, who introduced me to all the little amusements which suited my age, and above all, to the theatre. The play was *As You Like It*; and the witchery of the whole scene is alive in my mind at this moment. I made, I believe, noise more than enough, and remember being so much scandalised at the quarrel between Orlando and his brother in the first scene, that I screamed out, "A'n't they brothers?" A few weeks' residence at home convinced me, who had till then been an only child in the house of my grandfather, that a quarrel between brothers was a very natural event.

The other circumstances I recollect of my residence in Bath are but trifling, yet I never recall them without a feeling of pleasure. The beauties of the parade (which of them I know not), with the river of Avon winding around it, and the lowing of the cattle from the opposite hills, are warm in my recollection, and are only rivalled by the splendours of a toy-shop somewhere near the Orange Grove. I had acquired, I know not by what means, a kind of superstitious terror for statuary of all kinds. No ancient iconoclast or modern Calvinist could have looked on the outside of the Abbey church (if I mistake not the principal church at Bath is so called) with more horror than the image of Jacob's Ladder, with all its angels, presented to my infant eye. My uncle effectually combated my terrors, and

formally introduced me to a statue of Neptune, which perhaps still keeps guard at the side of the Avon, where a pleasure boat crosses to Spring Gardens.

After being a year at Bath, I returned first to Edinburgh, and afterwards for a season to Sandy-Knowe;—and thus the time whiled away till about my eighth year, when it was thought sea-bathing might be of service to my lameness.

For this purpose, still under my aunt's protection, I remained some weeks at Prestonpans; a circumstance not worth mentioning, excepting to record my juvenile intimacy with an old military veteran, Dalgetty by name, who had pitched his tent in that little village, after all his campaigns, subsisting upon an ensign's half-pay, though called by courtesy a captain. As this old gentleman, who had been in all the German wars, found very few to listen to his tales of military feats, he formed a sort of alliance with me, and I used invariably to attend him for the pleasure of hearing those communications. Sometimes our conversation turned on the American war, which was then raging. It was about the time of Burgoyne's unfortunate expedition, to which my captain and I augured different conclusions. Somebody had shown me a map of North America, and, struck with the rugged appearance of the country, and the quantity of lakes, I expressed some doubts on the subject of the general's arriving safely at the end of his journey, which were very indignantly refuted by the captain. The news of the *Saratoga* disaster, while it gave me a little triumph, rather shook my intimacy with the veteran.

From Prestonpans I was transported back at my father's house in George's Square, which continued to be my most established place of residence, until my marriage in 1797. I felt the change from being a single indulged brat, to becoming a member of a large family, very severely; for under the gentle government of my kind grandmother, who was meekness itself, and of my aunt, who, though of an higher temper, was exceedingly attached to me, I had acquired a degree of licence which could not be permitted in a large family. I had sense enough, however, to bend my temper to my new circumstances; but such was the agony which I internally experienced, that I have guarded against nothing more in the education of my own family, than against their acquiring habits of self-willed caprice and domination. I found much consolation during this period of mortification, in the partiality of my mother. She joined to a light and happy temper of mind a strong turn to study

poetry and works of imagination. She was sincerely devout, but her religion was, as became her sex, of a cast less austere than my father's. Still, the discipline of the Presbyterian Sabbath was severely strict, and I think injudiciously so. Although Bunyan's *Pilgrim*, Gesner's *Death of Abel*, Rowe's *Letters*, and one or two other books, which, for that reason, I still have a favour for, were admitted to relieve the gloom of one dull sermon succeeding to another—there was far too much tedium annexed to the duties of the day; and in the end it did none of us any good.

My week-day tasks were more agreeable. My lameness and my solitary habits had made me a tolerable reader, and my hours of leisure were usually spent in reading aloud to my mother Pope's translation of Homer, which, excepting a few traditional ballads, and the songs in Allan Ramsay's *Evergreen*, was the first poetry which I perused. My mother had good natural taste and great feeling: she used to make me pause upon those passages which expressed generous and worthy sentiments, and if she could not divert me from those which were descriptive of battle and tumult, she contrived at least to divide my attention between them. My own enthusiasm, however, was chiefly awakened by the wonderful and the terrible—the common taste of children, but in which I have remained a child even unto this day. I got by heart, not as a task, but almost without intending it, the passages with which I was most pleased, and used to recite them aloud, both when alone and to others—more willingly, however, in my hours of solitude, for I had observed some auditors smile, and I dreaded ridicule at that time of life more than I have ever done since.

In [1778] I was sent to the second class of the Grammar School, or High School of Edinburgh, then taught by Mr. Luke Fraser, a good Latin scholar and a very worthy man. Though I had received, with my brothers, in private, lessons of Latin from Mr. James French, now a minister of the Kirk of Scotland, I was nevertheless rather behind the class in which I was placed, both in years and in progress. This was a real disadvantage, and one to which a boy of lively temper and talents ought to be as little exposed as one who might be less expected to make up his lee-way, as it is called. The situation has the unfortunate effect of reconciling a boy of the former character (which in a posthumous work I may claim for my own) to holding a subordinate station among his class-fellows—to which he would otherwise affix disgrace. There is also, from the constitution of

the High School, a certain danger not sufficiently attended to. The boys take precedence in their *places*, as they are called, according to their merit, and it requires a long while, in general, before even a clever boy, if he falls behind the class, or is put into one for which he is not quite ready, can force his way to the situation which his abilities really entitle him to hold. But, in the meanwhile, he is necessarily led to be the associate and companion of those inferior spirits with whom he is placed ; for the system of precedence, though it does not limit the general intercourse among the boys, has nevertheless the effect of throwing them into clubs and coteries, according to the vicinity of the seats they hold. A boy of good talents, therefore, placed even for a time among his inferiors, especially if they be also his elders, learns to participate in their pursuits and objects of ambition, which are usually very distinct from the acquisition of learning ; and it will be well if he does not also imitate them in that indifference which is contented with bustling over a lesson so as to avoid punishment, without affecting superiority or aiming at reward. It was probably owing to this circumstance, that, although at a more advanced period of life I have enjoyed considerable facility in acquiring languages, I did not make any great figure at the High School—or, at least, any exertions which I made were desultory and little to be depended on.

Our class contained some very excellent scholars. The first *Dux* was James Buchan, who retained his honoured place, almost without a day's interval, all the while we were at the High School. He was afterwards at the head of the medical staff in Egypt, and in exposing himself to the plague infection, by attending the hospitals there, displayed the same well-regulated and gentle, yet determined perseverance, which placed him most worthily at the head of his school-fellows, while many lads of livelier parts and dispositions held an inferior station. The next best scholars (*sed longo intervallo*) were my friend David Douglas, the heir and *élève* of the celebrated Adam Smith, and James Hope, now a Writer to the Signet, both since well known and distinguished in their departments of the law. As for myself, I glanced like a meteor from one end of the class to the other, and commonly disgusted my kind master as much by negligence and frivolity as I occasionally pleased him by flashes of intellect and talent. Among my companions, my good-nature and a flow of ready imagination rendered me very popular. Boys are uncommonly just in their feelings, and at least equally generous. My lameness, and the efforts which I made to supply that dis-

advantage, by making up in address what I wanted in activity, engaged the latter principle in my favour; and in the winter play hours, when hard exercise was impossible, my tales used to assemble an admiring audience round Lucky Brown's fireside, and happy was he that could sit next to the inexhaustible narrator. I was also, though often negligent of my own task, always ready to assist my friends; and hence I had a little party of staunch partisans and adherents, stout of hand and heart, though somewhat dull of head—the very tools for raising a hero to eminence. So, on the whole, I made a brighter figure in the yards than in the class.

My father did not trust our education solely to our High School lessons. We had a tutor at home [Mr. James Mitchell], a young man of an excellent disposition, and a laborious student. He was bred to the Kirk, but unfortunately took such a very strong turn to fanaticism, that he afterwards resigned an excellent living in a seaport town, merely because he could not persuade the mariners of the guilt of setting sail of a Sabbath,—in which, by-the-bye, he was less likely to be successful, as, *ceteris paribus*, sailors, from an opinion that it is a fortunate omen, always choose to weigh anchor on that day. The calibre of this young man's understanding may be judged of by this anecdote; but in other respects, he was a faithful and active instructor; and from him chiefly I learned writing and arithmetic. I repeated to him my French lessons, and studied with him my themes in the classics, but not classically. I also acquired, by disputing with him (for this he readily permitted), some knowledge of school-divinity and church-history, and a great acquaintance in particular with the old books describing the early history of the Church of Scotland, the wars and sufferings of the Covenanters, and so forth. I, with a head on fire for chivalry, was a Cavalier; my friend was a Roundhead: I was a Tory, and he was a Whig. I hated Presbyterians, and admired Montrose with his victorious Highlanders; he liked the Presbyterian Ulysses, the dark and politic Argyle: so that we never wanted subjects of dispute; but our disputes were always amicable. In all these tenets there was no real conviction on my part, arising out of acquaintance with the views or principles of either party; nor had my antagonist address enough to turn the debate on such topics. I took up my politics at that period, as King Charles II. did his religion, from an idea that the Cavalier creed was the more gentlemanlike persuasion of the two,

After having been three years under Mr. Fraser, our class was, in the usual routine of the school, turned over to Dr. Adam, the Rector. It was from this respectable man that I first learned the value of the knowledge I had hitherto considered only as a burdensome task. It was the fashion to remain two years at his class, where we read Cæsar, and Livy, and Sallust, in prose ; Virgil, Horace, and Terence, in verse. I had by this time mastered, in some degree, the difficulties of the language, and began to be sensible of its beauties. This was really gathering grapes from thistles ; nor shall I soon forget the swelling of my little pride when the Rector pronounced, that though many of my school-fellows understood the Latin better, *Gualterus Scott* was behind few in following and enjoying the author's meaning. Thus encouraged, I distinguished myself by some attempts at poetical versions from Horace and Virgil. Dr. Adam used to invite his scholars to such essays, but never made them tasks. I gained some distinction upon these occasions, and the Rector in future took much notice of me ; and his judicious mixture of censure and praise went far to counterbalance my habits of indolence and inattention. I saw I was expected to do well, and I was piqued in honour to vindicate my master's favourable opinion. I climbed, therefore, to the first form ; and, though I never made a first-rate Latinist, my school-fellows, and what was of more consequence, I myself, considered that I had a character for learning to maintain. Dr. Adam, to whom I owed so much, never failed to remind me of my obligations when I had made some figure in the literary world. He was, indeed, deeply imbued with that fortunate vanity which alone could induce a man who has arms to pare and burn a muir, to submit to the yet more toilsome task of cultivating youth. As Catholics conde in the imputed righteousness of their saints, so did the good old Doctor plume himself upon the success of his scholars in life, all of which he never failed (and often justly) to claim as the creation, or at least the fruits, of his early instructions. He remembered the fate of every boy at his school during the fifty years he had superintended it, and always traced their success or misfortunes entirely to their attention or negligence when under his care. His "noisy mansion," which to others would have been a melancholy Bedlam, was the pride of his heart ; and the only fatigues he felt, amidst din and tumult, and the necessity of reading themes, hearing lessons, and maintaining some degree of order at the same time, were relieved by com-

paring himself to Cæsar, who could dictate to three secretaries at once ;—so ready is vanity to lighten the labours of duty.

It is a pity that a man so learned, so admirably adapted for his station, so useful, so simple, so easily contented, should have had other subjects of mortification. But the magistrates of Edinburgh, not knowing the treasure they possessed in Dr. Adam, encouraged a savage fellow, called Nicol, one of the undermasters, in insulting his person and authority. This man was an excellent classical scholar, and an admirable convivial humourist (which latter quality recommended him to the friendship of Burns); but worthless, drunken, and inhumanly cruel to the boys under his charge. He carried his feud against the Rector within an inch of assassination, for he waylaid and knocked him down in the dark. The favour which this worthless rival obtained in the town-council led to other consequences, which for some time clouded poor Adam's happiness and fair fame. When the French Revolution broke out, and parties ran high in approving or condemning it, the Doctor incautiously joined the former. This was very natural, for as all his ideas of existing governments were derived from his experience of the town-council of Edinburgh, it must be admitted they scarce brooked comparison with the free states of Rome and Greece, from which he borrowed his opinions concerning republics. His want of caution in speaking on the political topics of the day lost him the respect of the boys, most of whom were accustomed to hear very different opinions on those matters in the bosom of their families. This, however (which was long after my time), passed away with other heats of the period, and the Doctor continued his labours till about a year since, when he was struck with palsy while teaching his class. He survived a few days, but becoming delirious before his dissolution, conceived he was still in school, and after some expressions of applause or censure, he said, "But it grows dark—the boys may dismiss,"—and instantly expired.

From Dr. Adam's class I should, according to the usual routine, have proceeded immediately to college. But, fortunately, I was not yet to lose, by a total dismissal from constraint, the acquaintance with the Latin which I had acquired. My health had become rather delicate from rapid growth, and my father was easily persuaded to allow me to spend half-a-year at Kelso with my kind aunt, Miss Janet Scott, whose inmate I again became. It was hardly worth mentioning that I had frequently visited her during our short vacations.

At this time she resided in a small house, situated very pleasantly in a large garden, to the eastward of the churchyard of Kelso, which extended down to the Tweed. It was then my father's property, from whom it was afterwards purchased by my uncle. My grandmother was now dead, and my aunt's only companion, besides an old maid-servant, was my cousin, Miss Barbara Scott, now Mrs. Meik. My time was here left entirely to my own disposal, excepting for about four hours in the day, when I was expected to attend the Grammar-school of the village. The teacher, at that time, was Mr. Lancelot Whale, an excellent classical scholar, a humourist, and a worthy man. He had a supreme antipathy to the puns which his very uncommon name frequently gave rise to ; insomuch, that he made his son spell the word *Wale*, which only occasioned the young man being nicknamed *the Prince of Wales* by the military mess to which he belonged. As for Whale, senior, the least allusion to Jonah, or the terming him an odd fish, or any similar quibble, was sure to put him beside himself. In point of knowledge and taste, he was far too good for the situation he held, which only required that he should give his scholars a rough foundation in the Latin language. My time with him, though short, was spent greatly to my advantage and his gratification. He was glad to escape to Persius and Tacitus from the eternal Rudiments and Cornelius Nepos ; and as perusing these authors with one who began to understand them was to him a labour of love, I made considerable progress under his instructions. I suspect, indeed, that some of the time dedicated to me was withdrawn from the instruction of his more regular scholars ; but I was as grateful as I could. I acted as usher, and heard the inferior classes, and I spouted the speech of Galgacus at the public examination, which did not make the less impression on the audience that few of them probably understood one word of it.

In the meanwhile my acquaintance with English literature was gradually extending itself. In the intervals of my school hours I had always perused with avidity such books of history or poetry or voyages and travels as chance presented to me—not forgetting the usual, or rather ten times the usual, quantity of fairy tales, Eastern stories, romances, etc. These studies were totally unregulated and undirected. My tutor thought it almost a sin to open a profane play or poem ; and my mother, besides that she might be in some degree trammelled by the religious scruples which he suggested, had no longer the opportunity to

hear me read poetry as formerly. I found, however, in her dressing-room (where I slept at one time) some odd volumes of Shakespeare, nor can I easily forget the rapture with which I sate up in my shirt reading them by the light of a fire in her apartment, until the bustle of the family rising from supper warned me it was time to creep back to my bed, where I was supposed to have been safely deposited since nine o'clock. Chance, however, threw in my way a poetical preceptor. This was no other than the excellent and benevolent Dr. Blacklock, well known at that time as a literary character. I know not how I attracted his attention, and that of some of the young men who boarded in his family; but so it was that I became a frequent and favoured guest. The kind old man opened to me the stores of his library, and through his recommendation I became intimate with Ossian and Spenser. I was delighted with both, yet I think chiefly with the latter poet. The tawdry repetitions of the Ossianic phraseology disgusted me rather sooner than might have been expected from my age. But Spenser I could have read for ever. Too young to trouble myself about the allegory, I considered all the knights and ladies and dragons and giants in their outward and exoteric sense, and God only knows how delighted I was to find myself in such society. As I had always a wonderful facility in retaining in my memory whatever verses pleased me, the quantity of Spenser's stanzas which I could repeat was really marvellous. But this memory of mine was a very fickle ally, and has through my whole life acted merely upon its own capricious motion, and might have enabled me to adopt old Beattie of Meikledale's answer, when complimented by a certain reverend divine on the strength of the same faculty:—"No, sir," answered the old Borderer, "I have no command of my memory. It only retains what hits my fancy, and probably, sir, if you were to preach to me for two hours, I would not be able when you finished to remember a word you had been saying." My memory was precisely of the same kind: it seldom failed to preserve most tenaciously a favourite passage of poetry, a play-house ditty, or, above all, a Border-raid ballad; but names, dates, and the other technicalities of history, escaped me in a most melancholy degree. The philosophy of history, a much more important subject, was also a sealed book at this period of my life; but I gradually assembled much of what was striking and picturesque in historical narrative; and when, in riper years, I attended more to the deduction of general principles, I was furnished

with a powerful host of examples in illustration of them. I was, in short, like an ignorant gamester, who kept up a good hand until he knew how to play it.

I left the High School, therefore, with a great quantity of general information, ill-arranged, indeed, and collected without system ; yet deeply impressed upon my mind ; readily assorted by my power of connexion and memory, and gilded, if I may be permitted to say so, by a vivid and active imagination. If my studies were not under any direction at Edinburgh, in the country, it may be well imagined, they were less so. A respectable subscription library, a circulating library of ancient standing, and some private book-shelves, were open to my random perusal, and I waded into the stream like a blind man into a ford, without the power of searching my way, unless by groping for it. My appetite for books was as ample and indiscriminating as it was indefatigable, and I since have had too frequently reason to repent that few ever read so much, and to so little purpose.

Among the valuable acquisitions I made about this time, was an acquaintance with Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, through the flat medium of Mr. Hoole's translation. But above all, I then first became acquainted with Bishop Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*. As I had been from infancy devoted to legendary lore of this nature, and only reluctantly withdrew my attention, from the scarcity of materials and the rudeness of those which I possessed, it may be imagined, but cannot be described, with what delight I saw pieces of the same kind which had amused my childhood, and still continued in secret the Delilahs of my imagination, considered as the subject of sober research, grave commentary, and apt illustration, by an editor who shewed his poetical genius was capable of emulating the best qualities of what his pious labour preserved. I remember well the spot where I read these volumes for the first time. It was beneath a huge platanus-tree, in the ruins of what had been intended for an old-fashioned arbour in the *garden* I have mentioned. The summer-day sped onward so fast, that notwithstanding the sharp appetite of thirteen, I forgot the hour of dinner, was sought for with anxiety, and was still found entranced in my intellectual banquet. To read and to remember was in this instance the same thing, and henceforth I overwhelmed my schoolfellows, and all who would hearken to me, with tragical recitations from the ballads of Bishop Percy. The first time, too, I could scrape a few shillings together, which were not com-

mon occurrences with me, I bought unto myself a copy of these beloved volumes; nor do I believe I ever read a book half so frequently, or with half the enthusiasm. About this period also I became acquainted with the works of Richardson, and those of Mackenzie—(whom in later years I became entitled to call my friend)—with Fielding, Smollett, and some others of our best novelists.

To this period also I can trace distinctly the awaking of that delightful feeling for the beauties of natural objects which has never since deserted me. The neighbourhood of Kelso, the most beautiful, if not the most romantic village in Scotland, is eminently calculated to awaken these ideas. It presents objects, not only grand in themselves, but venerable from their association. The meeting of two superb rivers, the Tweed and the Teviot, both renowned in song—the ruins of an ancient abbey—the more distant vestiges of Roxburgh Castle—the modern mansion of Fleurs, which is so situated as to combine the ideas of ancient baronial grandeur with those of modern taste—are in themselves objects of the first class; yet are so mixed, united, and melted among a thousand other beauties of a less prominent description, that they harmonise into one general picture, and please rather by unison than by concord. I believe I have written unintelligibly upon this subject, but it is fitter for the pencil than the pen. The romantic feelings which I have described as predominating in my mind, naturally rested upon and associated themselves with these grand features of the landscape around me; and the historical incidents, or traditional legends connected with many of them, gave to my admiration a sort of intense impression of reverence, which at times made my heart feel too big for its bosom. From this time the love of natural beauty, more especially when combined with ancient ruins, or remains of our fathers' piety or splendour, became with me an insatiable passion, which, if circumstances had permitted, I would willingly have gratified by travelling over half the globe.

I was recalled to Edinburgh about the time when the College meets, and put at once to the Humanity class, under Mr. Hill, and the first Greek class, taught by Mr. Dalzell. The former held the reins of discipline very loosely, and though beloved by his students—for he was a good-natured man as well as a good scholar—he had not the art of exciting our attention as well as liking. This was a dangerous character with whom to trust one who relished labour as little as I did; and amid the riot of

his class I speedily lost much of what I had learned under Adam and Whale. At the Greek class, I might have made a better figure, for Professor Dalzell maintained a great deal of authority, and was not only himself an admirable scholar, but was always deeply interested in the progress of his students. But here lay the villany. Almost all my companions who had left the High School at the same time with myself, had acquired a smattering of Greek before they came to College. I, alas ! had none ; and finding myself far inferior to all my fellow-students, I could hit upon no better mode of vindicating my equality than by professing my contempt for the language, and my resolution not to learn it. A youth who died early, himself an excellent Greek scholar, saw my negligence and folly with pain, instead of contempt. He came to call on me in George's Square, and pointed out in the strongest terms the silliness of the conduct I had adopted, told me I was distinguished by the name of the *Greek Blockhead*, and exhorted me to redeem my reputation while it was called to-day. My stubborn pride received this advice with sulky civility ; the birth of my Mentor (whose name was Archibald, the son of an innkeeper) did not, as I thought in my folly, authorise him to intrude upon me his advice. The other was not sharp-sighted, or his consciousness of a generous intention overcame his resentment. He offered me his daily and nightly assistance, and pledged himself to bring me forward with the foremost of my class. I felt some twinges of conscience, but they were unable to prevail over my pride and self-conceit. The poor lad left me more in sorrow than in anger, nor did we ever meet again. All hopes of my progress in the Greek were now over ; insomuch that when we were required to write essays on the authors we had studied, I had the audacity to produce a composition in which I weighed Homer against Ariosto, and pronounced him wanting in the balance. I supported this heresy by a profusion of bad reading and flimsy argument. The wrath of the Professor was extreme, while at the same time he could not suppress his surprise at the quantity of out-of-the-way knowledge which I displayed. He pronounced upon me the severe sentence—that dunce I was, and dunce was to remain—which, however, my excellent and learned friend lived to revoke over a bottle of Burgundy, at our literary Club at Fortune's, of which he was a distinguished member.

Meanwhile, as if to eradicate my slightest tincture of Greek, I fell ill during the middle of Mr. Dalzell's second class, and

migrated a second time to Kelso, where I again continued a long time reading what and how I pleased, and of course reading nothing but what afforded me immediate entertainment. The only thing which saved my mind from utter dissipation, was that turn for historical pursuit, which never abandoned me even at the idlest period. I had forsworn the Latin classics for no reason I know of, unless because they were akin to the Greek; but the occasional perusal of Buchanan's history, that of Mathew of Paris, and other monkish chronicles, kept up a kind of familiarity with the language even in its rudest state. But I forgot the very letters of the Greek alphabet; a loss never to be repaired, considering what that language is, and who they were who employed it in their compositions.

About this period—or soon afterwards—my father judged it proper I should study mathematics; a study upon which I entered with all the ardour of novelty. My tutor was an aged person, Dr. MacFait, who had in his time been distinguished as a teacher of this science. Age, however, and some domestic inconveniences, had diminished his pupils, and lessened his authority amongst the few who remained. I think that, had I been more fortunately placed for instruction, or had I had the spur of emulation, I might have made some progress in this science, of which, under the circumstances I have mentioned, I only acquired a very superficial smattering.

In other studies I was rather more fortunate. I made some progress in Ethics under Professor John Bruce, and was selected, as one of his students whose progress he approved, to read an essay before Principal Robertson. I was farther instructed in Moral Philosophy at the class of Mr. Dugald Stewart, whose striking and impressive eloquence riveted the attention even of the most volatile student. To sum up my academical studies, I attended the class of History, then taught by the present Lord Woodhouselee, and, as far as I remember, no others, excepting those of the Civil and Municipal Law. So that, if my learning be flimsy and inaccurate, the reader must have some compassion even for an idle workman who had so narrow a foundation to build upon. If, however, it should ever fall to the lot of youth to peruse these pages—let such a reader remember, that it is with the deepest regret that I recollect in my manhood the opportunities of learning which I neglected in my youth; that through every part of my literary career I have felt pinched and hampered by my own ignorance; and that I would at this moment give half the reputation I have had the good fortune to acquire, if by

doing so I could rest the remaining part upon a sound foundation of learning and science.

I imagine my father's reason for sending me to so few classes in the College, was a desire that I should apply myself particularly to my legal studies. He had not determined whether I should fill the situation of an Advocate or a Writer ; but judiciously considering the technical knowledge of the latter to be useful at least, if not essential, to a barrister, he resolved I should serve the ordinary apprenticeship of five years to his own profession. I accordingly entered into indentures with my father about 1785-6, and entered upon the dry and barren wilderness of forms and conveyances.

I cannot reproach myself with being entirely an idle apprentice—far less, as the reader might reasonably have expected,

“A clerk foredoom'd my father's soul to cross.”

The drudgery, indeed, of the office I disliked, and the confinement I altogether detested ; but I loved my father, and I felt the rational pride and pleasure of rendering myself useful to him. I was ambitious also ; and among my companions in labour, the only way to gratify ambition was to labour hard and well. Other circumstances reconciled me in some measure to the confinement. The allowance for copy-money furnished a little fund for the *menus plaisirs* of the circulating library and the Theatre ; and this was no trifling incentive to labour. When actually at the oar, no man could pull it harder than I ; and I remember writing upwards of 120 folio pages with no interval either for food or rest. Again, the hours of attendance on the office were lightened by the power of choosing my own books, and reading them in my own way, which often consisted in beginning at the middle or the end of a volume. A deceased friend, who was a fellow-apprentice with me, used often to express his surprise that, after such a hop-step-and-jump perusal, I knew as much of the book as he had been able to acquire from reading it in the usual manner. My desk usually contained a store of most miscellaneous volumes, especially works of fiction of every kind, which were my supreme delight. I might except novels, unless those of the better and higher class ; for though I read many of them, yet it was with more selection than might have been expected. The whole Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy tribe I abhorred ; and it required the art of Burney, or the feeling of Mackenzie to fix my attention upon a domestic tale. But all that was adventurous and romantic I devoured without much discrimination,

and I really believe I have read as much nonsense of this class as any man now living. Everything which touched on knight-errantry was particularly acceptable to me, and I soon attempted to imitate what I so greatly admired. My efforts, however, were in the manner of the tale-teller, not of the bard.

My greatest intimate, from the days of my school-tide, was Mr. John Irving, now a Writer to the Signet. We lived near each other, and by joint agreement were wont, each of us, to compose a romance for the other's amusement. These legends, in which the martial and the miraculous always predominated, we rehearsed to each other during our walks, which were usually directed to the most solitary spots about Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Crags. We naturally sought seclusion, for we were conscious no small degree of ridicule would have attended our amusement if the nature of it had become known. Whole holidays were spent in this singular pastime, which continued for two or three years, and had, I believe, no small effect in directing the turn of my imagination to the chivalrous and romantic in poetry and prose.

Meanwhile, the translations of Mr. Hoole having made me acquainted with Tasso and Ariosto, I learned from his notes on the latter that the Italian language contained a fund of romantic lore. A part of my earnings was dedicated to an Italian class which I attended twice a week, and rapidly acquired some proficiency. I had previously renewed and extended my knowledge of the French language, from the same principles of romantic research. Tressan's romances, the *Bibliothèque Bleue* and *Bibliothèque de Romans*, were already familiar to me; and I now acquired intimacy with the works of Dante, Boiardo, Pulci, and other eminent Italian authors. I fastened also, like a tiger, upon every collection of old songs or romances which chance threw in my way, or which my scrutiny was able to discover on the dusty shelves of James Sibbald's circulating library in the Parliament Square. This collection, now dismantled and dispersed, contained at that time many rare and curious works, seldom found in such a collection. Mr. Sibbald himself, a man of rough manners but of some taste and judgment, cultivated music and poetry, and in his shop I had a distant view of some literary characters, besides the privilege of ransacking the stores of old French and Italian books, which were in little demand among the bulk of his subscribers. Here I saw the unfortunate Andrew Macdonald, author of *Vimonda*; and here, too, I saw at a distance the boast of Scotland, Robert

Burns. Of the latter I shall presently have occasion to speak more fully.*

I am inadvertently led to confound dates while I talk of this remote period, for, as I have no notes, it is impossible for me to remember with accuracy the progress of studies, if they deserve the name, so irregular and miscellaneous.

But about the second year of my apprenticeship, my health, which from rapid growth and other causes, had been hitherto

* ["As for Burns," he writes, "I may truly say, '*Virgilium videntum*.' I was a lad of fifteen in 1786-7, when he came first to Edinburgh, but had sense and feeling enough to be much interested in his poetry, and would have given the world to know him; but I had very little acquaintance with any literary people, and still less with the gentry of the west country,—the two sets that he most frequented. Mr. Thomas Grierson was at that time a clerk of my father's. He knew Burns, and promised to ask him to his lodgings to dinner, but had no opportunity to keep his word, otherwise I might have seen more of this distinguished man. As it was, I saw him one day at the late venerable Professor Fergusson's, where there sat several gentlemen of literary reputation, among whom I remember the celebrated Mr. Dugald Stewart. Of course we youngsters sat silent, looked and listened. The only thing I remember which was remarkable in Burns' manner, was the effect produced upon him by a print of Bunbury's, representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on the one side, on the other his widow, with a child in her arms. These lines were written beneath,—

'Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,
Perhaps that parent wept her soldier slain;
Bent o'er her babe, her eyes dissolved in dew;
The big drops, mingling with the milk he drew,
Gave the sad presage of his future years,
The child of misery baptised in tears.'

Burns seemed much affected by the print, or rather the idea, which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked whose the lines were, and it chanced that nobody but myself remembered that they occur in a half-forgotten poem of Langhorne's, called by the unpromising title of *The Justice of the Peace*. I whispered my information to a friend present, who mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word, which, though of mere civility, I then received, and still recollect, with very great pleasure. . . . His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the slightest presumption. Among the men who were the most learned of their time and country, he expressed himself with perfect firmness, but without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet at the same time with modesty. I do not remember any part of his conversation distinctly enough to be quoted, nor did I ever see him again, except in the street, where he did not recognise me, as I could not expect he should."

—*Letter to J. G. L., 1827.*]

rather uncertain and delicate, was affected by the breaking of a blood-vessel. The regimen I had to undergo on this occasion was far from agreeable. It was spring, and the weather raw and cold, yet I was confined to bed with a single blanket, and bled and blistered till I scarcely had a pulse left. I had all the appetite of a growing boy, but was prohibited any sustenance beyond what was absolutely necessary for the support of nature, and that in vegetables alone. Above all, with a considerable disposition to talk, I was not permitted to open my lips without one or two old ladies who watched my couch being ready at once to souse upon me, "imposing silence with a stilly sound." My only refuge was reading and playing at chess. To the romances and poetry, which I chiefly delighted in, I had always added the study of history, especially as connected with military events. I was encouraged in this latter study by a tolerable acquaintance with geography, and by the opportunities I had enjoyed while with Mr. MacFait to learn the meaning of the more ordinary terms of fortification. While, therefore, I lay in this dreary and silent solitude, I fell upon the resource of illustrating the battles I read of by the childish expedient of arranging shells, and seeds, and pebbles, so as to represent encountering armies. Diminutive cross-bows were contrived to mimic artillery, and with the assistance of a friendly carpenter, I contrived to model a fortress, which, like that of Uncle Toby, represented whatever place happened to be uppermost in my imagination. I fought my way thus through Vertot's *Knights of Malta*—a book which, as it hovered between history and romance, was exceedingly dear to me; and Orme's interesting and beautiful *History of Indostan*, whose copious plans, aided by the clear and luminous explanations of the author, rendered my imitative amusement peculiarly easy. Other moments of these weary weeks were spent in looking at the Meadow Walks, by assistance of a combination of mirrors so arranged that, while lying in bed, I could see the troops march out to exercise, or any other incident which occurred on that promenade.

After one or two relapses, my constitution recovered the injury it had sustained, though for several months afterwards I was restricted to a severe vegetable diet. And I must say, in passing, that though I gained health under this necessary restriction, yet it was far from being agreeable to me, and I was affected whilst under its influence with a nervousness which I never felt before or since. A disposition to start upon slight

alarms—a want of decision in feeling and acting, which has not usually been my failing, an acute sensibility to trifling inconveniences—and an unnecessary apprehension of contingent misfortunes, rise to my memory as connected with my vegetable diet, although they may very possibly have been entirely the result of the disorder, and not of the cure. Be this as it may, with this illness I bade farewell both to disease and medicine ; for since that time, till the hour I am now writing, I have enjoyed a state of the most robust health, having only had to complain of occasional headaches or stomachic affections when I have been long without taking exercise, or have lived too convivially—the latter having been occasionally, though not habitually, the error of my youth, as the former has been of my advanced life.

My frame gradually became hardened with my constitution, and being both tall and muscular, I was rather disfigured than disabled by my lameness. This personal disadvantage did not prevent me from taking much exercise on horseback, and making long journeys on foot, in the course of which I often walked from twenty to thirty miles a day. A distinct instance occurs to me. I remember walking with poor James Ramsay, my fellow-apprentice, now no more, and two other friends, to breakfast at Prestonpans. We spent the forenoon in visiting the ruins at Seton and the field of battle at Preston—dined at Prestonpans on *tiled haddocks* very sumptuously—drank half a bottle of port each, and returned in the evening. This could not be less than thirty miles, nor do I remember being at all fatigued upon the occasion.

These excursions on foot or horseback formed by far my most favourite amusement. I have all my life delighted in travelling, though I have never enjoyed that pleasure upon a large scale. It was a propensity which I sometimes indulged so unduly as to alarm and vex my parents. Wood, water, wilderness itself, had an inexpressible charm for me, and I had a dreamy way of going much further than I intended, so that unconsciously my return was protracted, and my parents had sometimes serious cause of uneasiness. For example, I once set out with Mr. George Abercromby (the son of the immortal General), Mr. William Clerk, and some others, to fish in the lake above Howgate, and the stream which descends from it into the Esk. We breakfasted at Howgate, and fished the whole day ; and while we were on our return next morning, I was easily seduced by William Clerk, then a great intimate, to visit Pennycuik

House, the seat of his family. Here he and John Irving, and I for their sake, were overwhelmed with kindness by the late Sir John Clerk and his lady, the present Dowager Lady Clerk. The pleasure of looking at fine pictures, the beauty of the place, and the flattering hospitality of the owners, drowned all recollection of home for a day or two. Meanwhile our companions, who had walked on without being aware of our digression, returned to Edinburgh without us, and excited no small alarm in my father's household. At length, however, they became accustomed to my escapades. My father used to protest to me on such occasions that he thought I was born to be a strolling pedlar; and though the prediction was intended to mortify my conceit, I am not sure that I altogether disliked it. I was now familiar with Shakspeare, and thought of Autolycus's song—

"Jog on, jog on, the foot-path way,
And merrily hent the stile-a;
A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a."

My principal object in these excursions was the pleasure of seeing romantic scenery, or what afforded me at least equal pleasure, the places which had been distinguished by remarkable historical events. The delight with which I regarded the former of course had general approbation, but I often found it difficult to procure sympathy with the interest I felt in the latter. Yet to me, the wandering over the field of Bannockburn was the source of more exquisite pleasure than gazing upon the celebrated landscape from the battlements of Stirling castle. I do not by any means infer that I was dead to the feeling of picturesque scenery; on the contrary, few delighted more in its general effect. But I was unable with the eye of a painter to dissect the various parts of the scene, to comprehend how the one bore upon the other, to estimate the effect which various features of the view had in producing its leading and general effect. I have never, indeed, been capable of doing this with precision or nicety, though my latter studies have led me to amend and arrange my original ideas upon the subject. Even the humble ambition, which I long cherished, of making sketches of those places which interested me, from a defect of eye or of hand was totally ineffectual. After long study and many efforts, I was unable to apply the elements of perspective or of shade to the scene before me, and was obliged to relinquish in despair an art which I was most anxious to practise. But shew

me an old castle or a field of battle, and I was at home at once, filled it with its combatants in their proper costume, and overwhelmed my hearers by the enthusiasm of my description. In crossing Magus Moor, near St. Andrews, the spirit moved me to give a picture of the assassination of the Archbishop of St. Andrews to some fellow-travellers with whom I was accidentally associated, and one of them, though well acquainted with the story, protested my narrative had frightened away his night's sleep. I mention this to shew the distinction between a sense of the picturesque in action and in scenery. If I have since been able in poetry to trace with some success the principles of the latter, it has always been with reference to its general and leading features, or under some alliance with moral feeling ; and even this proficiency has cost me study. Meanwhile I endeavoured to make amends for my ignorance of drawing, by adopting a sort of technical memory respecting the scenes I visited. Wherever I went I cut a piece of a branch from a tree—these constituted what I called my log-book ; and I intended to have a set of chessmen out of them, each having reference to the place where it was cut—as the kings from Falkland and Holy-Rood ; the queens from Queen Mary's yew tree at Crookston ; the bishops from abbeys or episcopal palaces ; the knights from baronial residences ; the rooks from royal fortresses ; and the pawns generally from places worthy of historical note. But this whimsical design I never carried into execution.

With music it was even worse than with painting. My mother was anxious we should at least learn Psalmody ; but the incurable defects of my voice and ear soon drove my teacher to despair. It is only by long practice that I have acquired the power of selecting or distinguishing melodies ; and although now few things delight or affect me more than a simple tune sung with feeling, yet I am sensible that even this pitch of musical taste has only been gained by attention and habit, and, as it were, by my feeling of the words being associated with the tune. I have therefore been usually unsuccessful in composing words to a tune, although my friend Dr. Clarke, and other musical composers, have sometimes been able to make a happy union between their music and my poetry.

In other points, however, I began to make some amends for the irregularity of my education. It is well known that in Edinburgh one great spur to emulation among youthful students is in those associations called *literary societies*, formed not only

for the purpose of debate, but of composition. These undoubtedly have some disadvantages, where a bold, petulant, and disputatious temper happens to be combined with considerable information and talent. Still, however, in order to such a person being actually spoiled by his mixing in such debates, his talents must be of a very rare nature, or his effrontery must be proof to every species of assault ; for there is generally, in a well-selected society of this nature, talent sufficient to meet the forwardest, and satire enough to penetrate the most undaunted. I am particularly obliged to this sort of club for introducing me about my seventeenth year into the society which at one time I had entirely dropped ; for, from the time of my illness at college, I had had little or no intercourse with any of my class-companions, one or two only excepted. Now, however, about 1788, I began to feel and take my ground in society. A ready wit, a good deal of enthusiasm, and a perception that soon ripened into tact and observation of character, rendered me an acceptable companion to many young men whose acquisitions in philosophy and science were infinitely superior to anything I could boast.

In the business of these societies—for I was a member of more than one successively—I cannot boast of having made any great figure. I never was a good speaker, unless upon some subject which strongly animated my feelings ; and, as I was totally unaccustomed to composition, as well as to the art of generalising my ideas upon any subject, my literary essays were but very poor work. I never attempted them unless when compelled to do so by the regulations of the society, and then I was like the Lord of Castle Rackrent, who was obliged to cut down a tree to get a few faggots to boil the kettle ; for the quantity of ponderous and miscellaneous knowledge which I really possessed on many subjects was not easily condensed, or brought to bear upon the object I wished particularly to become master of. Yet there occurred opportunities when this odd lumber of my brain, especially that which was connected with the recondite parts of history, did me, as Hamlet says, “yeoman’s service.” My memory of events was like one of the large, old-fashioned stone-cannons of the Turks—very difficult to load well and discharge, but making a powerful effect when by good chance any object did come within range of its shot. Such fortunate opportunities of exploding with effect maintained my literary character among my companions, with whom I soon met with great indulgence and regard. The persons with whom I chiefly lived at this period of my youth were William Clerk, already

mentioned ; James Edmonstoune, of Newton ; George Abercromby ; Adam Fergusson, son of the celebrated Professor Fergusson, and who combined the lightest and most airy temper with the best and kindest disposition ; John Irving, already mentioned ; the Honourable Thomas Douglas, now Earl of Selkirk ; David Boyle—and two or three others, who sometimes plunged deeply into politics and metaphysics, and not unfrequently “doffed the world aside, and bid it pass.”

Looking back on these times, I cannot applaud in all respects the way in which our days were spent. There was too much idleness, and sometimes too much conviviality : but our hearts were warm, our minds honourably bent on knowledge and literary distinction ; and if I, certainly the least informed of the party, may be permitted to bear witness, we were not without the fair and creditable means of attaining the distinction to which we aspired. In this society I was naturally led to correct my former useless course of reading ; for—feeling myself greatly inferior to my companions in metaphysical philosophy and other branches of regular study—I laboured, not without some success, to acquire at least such a portion of knowledge as might enable me to maintain my rank in conversation. In this I succeeded pretty well ; but unfortunately then, as often since through my life, I incurred the deserved ridicule of my friends from the superficial nature of my acquisitions, which being, in the mercantile phrase, *got up* for society, very often proved flimsy in the texture ; and thus the gifts of an uncommonly retentive memory and acute powers of perception were sometimes detrimental to their possessor, by encouraging him to a presumptuous reliance upon them.

Amidst these studies, and in this society, the time of my apprenticeship elapsed ; and in 1790, or thereabouts, it became necessary that I should seriously consider to which department of the law I was to attach myself. My father behaved with the most parental kindness. He offered, if I preferred his own profession, immediately to take me into partnership with him, which, though his business was much diminished, still afforded me an immediate prospect of a handsome independence. But he did not disguise his wish that I should relinquish this situation to my younger brother, and embrace the more ambitious profession of the bar. I had little hesitation in making my choice—for I was never very fond of money ; and in no other particular do the professions admit of a comparison. Besides, I knew and felt the inconveniences attached to that of a Writer ;

and I thought (like a young man) many of them were *ingenio non subeunda meo*." The appearance of personal dependence which that profession requires was disagreeable to me ; the sort of connexion between the client and the attorney seemed to render the latter more subservient than was quite agreeable to my nature ; and besides, I had seen many sad examples, while overlooking my father's business, that the utmost exertions, and the best meant services, do not secure the *man of business*, as he is called, from great loss, and most ungracious treatment on the part of his employers. The bar, though I was conscious of my deficiencies as a public speaker, was the line of ambition and liberty ; it was that also for which most of my contemporary friends were destined. And, lastly, although I would willingly have relieved my father of the labours of his business, yet I saw plainly we could not have agreed on some particulars if we had attempted to conduct it together, and that I should disappoint his expectations if I did not turn to the bar. So to that object my studies were directed with great ardour and perseverance during the years 1789, 1790, 1791, 1792.

In the usual course of study, the Roman or Civil Law was the first object of my attention—the second, the Municipal Law of Scotland. In the course of reading on both subjects, I had the advantage of studying in conjunction with my friend William Clerk, a man of the most acute intellects and powerful apprehension, and who, should he ever shake loose the fetters of indolence by which he has been hitherto trammelled, cannot fail to be distinguished in the highest degree. We attended the regular classes of both laws in the University of Edinburgh. The Civil Law chair, now worthily filled by Mr. Alexander Irving, might at that time be considered as in *abeyance*, since the person by whom it was occupied had never been fit for the situation, and was then almost in a stage of dotage. But the Scotch Law lectures were those of Mr. David Hume, who still continues to occupy that situation with as much honour to himself as advantage to his country. I copied over his lectures twice with my own hand, from notes taken in the class, and when I have had occasion to consult them, I can never sufficiently admire the penetration and clearness of conception which were necessary to the arrangement of the fabric of law, formed originally under the strictest influence of feudal principles, and innovated, altered, and broken in upon by the change of times, of habits, and of manners, until it resembles some ancient castle, partly entire, partly ruinous, partly dilapidated, patched

and altered during the succession of ages by a thousand additions and combinations, yet still exhibiting, with the marks of its antiquity, symptoms of the skill and wisdom of its founders, and capable of being analysed and made the subject of a methodical plan by an architect who can understand the various styles of the different ages in which it was subjected to alteration. Such an architect has Mr. Hume been to the Law of Scotland, neither wandering into fanciful and abstruse disquisitions, which are the more proper subject of the antiquary, nor satisfied with presenting to his pupils a dry and undigested detail of the laws in their present state, but combining the past state of our legal enactments with the present, and tracing clearly and judiciously the changes which took place, and the causes which led to them.

Under these auspices, I commenced my legal studies. A little parlour was assigned me in my father's house, which was spacious and convenient, and I took the exclusive possession of my new realms with all the feelings of novelty and liberty. Let me do justice to the only years of my life in which I applied to learning with stern, steady, and undeviating industry. The rule of my friend Clerk and myself was, that we should mutually qualify ourselves for undergoing an examination upon certain points of law every morning in the week, Sundays excepted. This was at first to have taken place alternately at each other's houses, but we soon discovered that my friend's resolution was inadequate to severing him from his couch at the early hour fixed for this exercitation. Accordingly, I agreed to go every morning to his house, which, being at the extremity of Prince's Street, New Town, was a walk of two miles. With great punctuality, however, I beat him up to his task every morning before seven o'clock, and in the course of two summers we went, by way of question and answer, through the whole of Heineccius's *Analysis of the Institutes and Pandects*, as well as through the smaller copy of Erskine's *Institutes of the Law of Scotland*. This course of study enabled us to pass with credit the usual trials, which, by the regulations of the Faculty of Advocates, must be undergone by every candidate for admission into their body. My friend William Clerk and I passed these ordeals on the same days—namely, the Civil Law trial on [June 30th, 1791], and the Scots Law trial on [July 6th, 1792]. On [July 11th, 1792], we both assumed the gown with all its duties and honours.

My progress in life during these two or three years had been

gradually enlarging my acquaintance, and facilitating my entrance into good company. My father and mother, already advanced in life, saw little society at home, excepting that of near relations, or upon particular occasions, so that I was left to form connexions in a great measure myself. It is not difficult for a youth, with a real desire to please and be pleased, to make his way into good society in Edinburgh—or indeed anywhere; and my family connexions, if they did not greatly further, had nothing to embarrass my progress. I was a gentleman, and so welcome anywhere, if so be I could behave myself, as Tony Lumpkin says, “in a concatenation accordingly.”

CHAPTER II

Call to the Bar—Early Friendships and Pursuits—Excursions to the Highlands and Border—Light-Horse Volunteers—Disappointment in Love—Publication of Ballads after Bürger. 1792-1797.

As may be said, I believe, with perfect truth of every really great man, Scott was self-educated in every branch of knowledge which he ever turned to account in the works of his genius—and he has himself told us that his real studies were those lonely and desultory ones of which he has given a copy in the first chapter of *Waverley*, where the hero is represented as “Driving through the sea of books, like a vessel without pilot or rudder;” that is to say, obeying nothing but the strong breath of native inclination. The *literary* details of that chapter may all be considered as autobiographical.

In all the studies of the two or three years preceding his call to the bar, his chief associate was William Clerk; and, indeed, of all the connexions he formed in life, I now doubt if there was one to whom he owed more. He always continued to say that Clerk was unsurpassed in strength and acuteness of faculties, by any man he had ever conversed with familiarly; and though he has left no literary monument whatever behind him, he was from youth to a good old age indefatigable in study, and rivalled, I believe, by very few of his contemporaries, either in the variety or the accuracy of his acquired knowledge. He entered zealously from the first into all Scott’s antiquarian pursuits, and he it was who mainly aided and stimulated him throughout the few years which he did devote to his proper training for the profession of the bar. But these were not all the obligations: it was Clerk that first or mainly awakened his social ambition: it was he that drew him out of the company of his father’s apprentices,

and taught him to rise above their clubs and festivities, and the rough, irregular habits of all their intervals of relaxation. It was probably very much in consequence of the tacit influence of this tie that he resolved on following the upper and precarious branch of his profession, instead of that in which his father's eldest son had, if he chose, the certain prospect of early independence, and every likelihood of a plentiful fortune in the end.

Yet both in his adoption, soon after that friendship began, of a somewhat superior tone of manners and habits generally, and in his ultimate decision for the bar, as well as in his strenuous preparation during a considerable space of time for that career, there is little question that another influence must have powerfully co-operated. Of the few early letters of Scott that have been preserved, almost all are addressed to Clerk, who says, "I ascribe my little handful to a sort of instinctive prophetic sense of his future greatness;"—but a great mass of letters addressed to Scott himself, during his early years, are still in being, and they are important documents in his history, for, as Southey well remarks, letters often tell more of the character of the man they are to be read by than of him who writes them. Throughout all these, then, there occurs no coarse or even jocular suggestion as to the conduct of *Scott* in that particular, as to which most youths of his then age are so apt to lay up stores of self-reproach. In that season of hot and impetuous blood he may not have escaped quite blameless; but I have the concurrent testimony of all the most intimate among his surviving associates, that he was remarkably free from such indiscretions; that while his high sense of honour shielded him from the remotest dream of tampering with female innocence, he had an instinctive delicacy about him which made him recoil with utter disgust from low and vulgar debaucheries. His friends, I have heard more than one of them confess, used often to rally him on the coldness of his nature. By degrees they discovered that he had, from almost the dawn of the passions, cherished a secret attachment, which continued, through all the most perilous stage of life, to act as a romantic charm in safeguard of virtue. This was the early and innocent affection to which we owe the tenderest pages, not only of *Redgauntlet*, but of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, and of *Rokeby*. In all of these works the heroine has certain distinctive features, drawn from one and the same haunting dream of his manly adolescence.

It was about 1790, according to Mr. William Clerk, that Scott was observed to lay aside that carelessness, not to say

slovenliness, as to dress, which used to furnish matter for joking at the beginning of their acquaintance. He now did himself more justice in these little matters, became fond of mixing in general female society, and, as his friend expresses it, "began to set up for a squire of dames."

His personal appearance at this time was not unengaging. A lady of high rank, who well remembers him in the Old Assembly Rooms, says, "Young Walter Scott was a comely creature." * He had outgrown the sallowness of early ill-health, and had a fresh brilliant complexion. His eyes were clear, open, and well set, with a changeful radiance, to which teeth of the most perfect regularity and whiteness lent their assistance, while the noble expanse and elevation of the brow gave to the whole aspect a dignity far above the charm of mere features. His smile was always delightful; and I can easily fancy the peculiar intermixture of tenderness and gravity, with playful innocent hilarity and humour in the expression, as being well calculated to fix a fair lady's eye. His figure, excepting the blemish in one limb, must in those days have been eminently handsome; tall, much above the usual standard, it was cast in the very mould of a young Hercules; the head set on with singular grace, the throat and chest after the truest model of the antique, the hands delicately finished; the whole outline that of extraordinary vigour, without as yet a touch of clumsiness. When he had acquired a little facility of manner, his conversation must have been such as could have dispensed with any exterior advantages, and certainly brought swift forgiveness for the one unkindness of Nature. I have heard him, in talking of this part of his life, say, with an arch simplicity of look and tone, which those who were familiar with him can fill in for themselves—"It was a proud night with me when I first found that a pretty young woman could think it worth her while to sit and talk with me, hour after hour, in a corner of the ball-room, while all the world were capering in our view."

I believe, however, that the "pretty young woman" here specially alluded to, had occupied his attention before he ever appeared in the Edinburgh Assembly Rooms, or any of his friends took note of him as "setting up for a squire of dames." I have been told that their acquaintance began in the Greyfriars' churchyard, where, rain beginning to fall one Sunday as the congregation were dispersing, Scott happened to offer his umbrella, and the tender being accepted, so escorted *the lady of*

* The late Duchess Countess of Sutherland.

the green mantle to her residence, which proved to be at no great distance from his own. To return from church together had, it seems, grown into something like a custom before they met in society, Mrs. Scott being of the party. It then appeared that she and the lady's mother had been companions in their youth, though, both living secludedly, they had scarcely seen each other for many years ; and the two matrons now renewed their former intercourse. But no acquaintance appears to have existed between the fathers of the young people, until things had advanced in appearance farther than met the approbation of the good Clerk to the Signet.

Being aware that the young lady—Margaret, daughter of Sir John and Lady Jane Stuart Belches of Invermay, had prospects of fortune far above his son's, Mr. Scott conceived it his duty to give her parents warning that he observed a degree of intimacy which, if allowed to go on, might involve the parties in pain and disappointment. He had heard his son talk of a contemplated excursion to the part of the country in which his neighbour's estates lay, and not doubting that Walter's real object was different from that which he announced, introduced himself with a frank statement that he wished no such affair to proceed, without the express sanction of those most interested in the happiness of persons as yet too young to calculate consequences for themselves.—The northern Baronet had heard nothing of the young apprentice's intended excursion, and appeared to treat the whole business very lightly. He thanked Mr. Scott for his scrupulous attention—but added, that he believed he was mistaken ; and this paternal interference, which Walter did not hear of till long afterwards, produced no change in his relations with the object of his growing attachment.

I have neither the power nor the wish to give in detail the sequel of this story. It is sufficient to say, at present, that after he had through several years nourished the dream of an ultimate union with this lady, his hopes terminated in her being married to the late Sir William Forbes, of Pitsligo, Baronet, a gentleman of the highest character, to whom some affectionate allusions occur in one of the greatest of his works, and who lived to act the part of a most generous friend to his early rival throughout the anxieties and distresses of 1826 and 1827. The actual dispersion of the romantic vision and its immediate consequences will be mentioned in due time.

Redgauntlet shadows very distinctly many circumstances connected with the first grand step in the professional history of

Alan Fairford. The real *thesis*, however, was on the Title of the Pandects, *Concerning the Disposal of the Dead Bodies of Criminals*. It was dedicated (I doubt not by the careful father's advice) to his friend and neighbour in George's Square, Macqueen of Braxfield, Lord Justice-Clerk (or President of the Supreme Criminal Court) of Scotland. Darsie was present at Alan's "bit chack of dinner," and the old Clerk of the Signet was very joyous on the occasion.

I have often heard both Alan and Darsie laugh over their reminiscences of the important day when they "put on the gown." After the ceremony was completed, and they had mingled for some time with the crowd of barristers in the Outer Court, Scott said to his comrade, mimicking the air and tone of a Highland lass waiting at the Cross of Edinburgh to be hired for the harvest work—"We've stood here an hour by the Tron, hinny, and de'il a ane has speered our price." Some friendly solicitor, however, gave him a guinea fee before the Court rose; and as they walked down the High Street together, he said to Mr. Clerk, in passing a hosier's shop—"This is a sort of a wedding-day, Willie; I think I must go in and buy me a new night-cap." He did so accordingly; but his first fee of any consequence was expended on a silver taper-stand for his mother, which the old lady used to point to with great satisfaction, as it stood on her chimney-piece five-and-twenty years afterwards.

The friends had assumed the gown only the day before the Court of Session rose for the autumn vacation, and Scott appears to have escaped immediately afterwards to the familiar scenery of Kelso, where his kind uncle Robert, the retired East Indian Captain, had acquired the pretty villa of Rosebank, overhanging the Tweed. He had on a former occasion made an excursion into Northumberland as far as Flodden, and given, in a letter to Mr. Clerk, the results of a close inspection of that famous battle-field. He now induced his uncle to accompany him in another Northumbrian expedition, which extended to Hexham, where the grand Saxon Cathedral was duly studied.

It was, however, within a few days after Scott's return from his excursion to Hexham, that he made another expedition of more importance to the history of his life. While attending the Michaelmas head-court at Jedburgh, he was introduced to Mr. Robert Shortrede, who spent the greater part of his life in the enjoyment of much respect as Sheriff-substitute of Roxburghshire. Scott expressed his wish to visit the then wild and inaccessible district of Liddesdale, particularly with a view to examine the

ruins of the famous castle of Hermitage, and to pick up some of the ancient *riding ballads*, said to be still preserved among the descendants of the moss-troopers who had followed the banner of the Douglasses, when lords of that grim and remote fastness; and his new acquaintance offered to be his guide.

During seven successive years he made a *raid*, as he called it, into Liddesdale, in company with Mr. Shortrede; exploring every rivulet to its source, and every ruined *peel* from foundation to battlement. At this time no wheeled carriage had ever been seen in the district—the first, indeed, that ever appeared there was a gig, driven by Scott himself for a part of his way, when on the last of these seven excursions. There was no inn nor public-house of any kind in the whole valley; the travellers passed from the shepherd's hut to the minister's manse, and again from the cheerful hospitality of the manse to the rough and jolly welcome of the homestead; gathering, wherever they went, songs and tunes, and occasionally more tangible relics of antiquity—even such “a rowth of auld nicknackets” as Burns ascribes to Captain Grose. To these rambles Scott owed much of the materials of his “*Minstrelsy of the Border* ;” and not less of that intimate acquaintance with the living manners of these unsophisticated regions, which constitutes the chief charm of one of the most charming of his prose works. But how soon he had any definite object before him in his researches, seems very doubtful. “He was *makin’ himsel’ a’* the time,” said Mr. Shortrede; “but he didna ken maybe what he was about till years had passed. At first he thought o’ little, I dare say, but the queerness and the fun.”

In November, 1792, Scott and Clerk began their regular attendance at the Parliament House, and Scott, to use Mr. Clerk's words, “by-and-by crept into a tolerable share of such business as may be expected from a writer's connexion.” By this we are to understand that he was employed from time to time by his father, and probably a few other solicitors, in that dreary every-day taskwork, chiefly of long written *informations*, and other papers for the Court, on which young counsellors of the Scotch Bar were then expected to bestow a great deal of trouble for very scanty pecuniary remuneration, and with scarcely a chance of finding reserved for their hands any matter that could elicit the display of superior knowledge or understanding. He had also his part in the cases of persons suing *in formâ pauperis*; but how little important those that came to his share were, and how slender was the impression they had left on

his mind, we may gather from a note on *Redgauntlet*, wherein he signifies his doubts whether he really had ever been engaged in what he has certainly made the *cause célèbre* of Poor Peter Peebles.

But he soon became as famous for his powers of story-telling among the lawyers of the Outer-House, as he had been among the companions of his High-School days. The place where these idlers mostly congregated was called, it seems, by a name which sufficiently marks the date—it was *the Mountain*. Here, as Roger North says of the Court of King's Bench in his early day, "there was more news than law;" here hour after hour passed away, month after month, and year after year, in the interchange of light-hearted merriment among a circle of young men, more than one of whom, in after-times, attained the highest honours of the profession.

In March, 1793, when the Court rose, he proceeded into Galloway, in order to make himself acquainted with the case of a certain Rev. Mr. M'Naught, minister of Girthon, whose trial, on charges of habitual drunkenness, singing of lewd and profane songs, dancing and toying at a penny-wedding with a "sweetie wife" (that is, an itinerant vendor of gingerbread, etc.), and, moreover, of promoting irregular marriages as a justice of the peace, was about to take place before the General Assembly of the Kirk.

The "case of M'Naught" (fee, five guineas) is the earliest of Scott's legal papers that has been discovered; and it is perhaps as plausible a statement as the circumstances could bear. In May he was called on to support it at the bar of the Assembly; and he did so in a speech of considerable length. This was by far the most important business in which any solicitor had as yet employed him, and *The Mountain* mustered strong in the gallery. He began in a low voice, but by degrees gathered more confidence; and when it became necessary for him to analyse the evidence touching the penny-wedding, repeated some coarse specimens of his client's alleged conversation, in a tone so bold and free, that he was called to order with great austerity by one of the leading members of the Venerable Court. This seemed to confuse him not a little; so when, by-and-by, he had to recite a stanza of one of M'Naught's convivial ditties, he breathed it out in a faint and hesitating style: whereupon, thinking he needed encouragement, the allies in the gallery astounded the Assembly by cordial shouts of *hear! hear!—encore! encore!* They were immediately turned out, and Scott

got through the rest of his harangue very little to his own satisfaction.

He believed, in a word, that he had made a complete failure, and issued from the Court in a melancholy mood. At the door he found Adam Fergusson waiting to inform him that the brethren so unceremoniously extruded from the gallery had sought shelter in a neighbouring tavern, where they hoped he would join them. He complied with the invitation, but seemed for a long while incapable of enjoying the merriment of his friends. "Come, *Duns*," cried *the Baronet*;—"cheer up, man, and fill another tumbler; here's * * * * * going to give us *The Tailor*."—"Ah!" he answered with a groan—"the tailor was a better man than me, sirs; for he didna venture *ben* until he *kenned the way*." A certain comical old song, which had, perhaps, been a favourite with the minister of Girthon—

"The tailor he came here to sew,
And weel he kenn'd the way o't," etc.—

was, however, sung and chorused; and the evening ended in *High Jinks*.

Mr. M'Naught was deposed from the ministry. It is to be observed, that the research made with a view to pleading this cause, carried Scott for the first, and I believe for the last time, into the scenery of his *Guy Mannering*; and several of the names of the minor characters of the novel (M'Guffog, for example) appear in the list of witnesses.

If the preceding autumn forms a remarkable point in his history, as first introducing him to the manners of the wilder Border country, the summer which followed left traces of equal importance. He then visited some of the finest districts of Stirlingshire and Perthshire; and not in the percursor manner of his more boyish expeditions, but taking up his residence for a week or ten days in succession at the family residences of several of his young allies of *The Mountain*, and from thence familiarising himself at leisure with the country and the people round about. In this way he lingered some time at Tullibody, the seat of the father of Sir Ralph Abercromby, and grandfather of his friend George Abercromby; and heard from the old gentleman's own lips the narrative of a journey which he had been obliged to make to the retreat of Rob Roy. The venerable laird told how he was received by the cateran "with much courtesy," in a cavern exactly such as that of *Bean Lean*; dined on collops cut from some of his own cattle, which he recognised

hanging by their heels from the rocky roof beyond ; and returned in all safety, after concluding a bargain of *black-mail*—in virtue of which annual payment, Rob Roy guaranteed the future security of his herds against, not his own followers merely, but all freebooters whatever.

I believe the longest stay was at Meikle in Forfarshire, the seat of Patrick Murray of Simprim, whose passion for antiquities, especially military antiquities, had peculiarly endeared him both to Scott and Clerk. Here Adam Fergusson, too, was of the party ; and I have often heard them each and all dwell on the thousand scenes of adventure and merriment which diversified that visit. In the village churchyard, close beneath Mr. Murray's gardens, tradition still points out the tomb of Queen Guenever ; and the whole district abounds in objects of historical interest. Amidst them they spent their wandering days, while their evenings passed in the joyous festivity of a wealthy young bachelor's establishment, or sometimes under the roofs of neighbours less refined than their host, the Balmawhapples of the Braes of Angus. From Meikle they made a trip to Dunottar Castle, the ruins of the huge old fortress of the Earls Marischall, and it was in the churchyard of that place that Scott then saw for the first and last time Peter Paterson, the living Old Mortality. He and Mr. Walker, the minister of the parish, found the poor man refreshing the epitaphs on the tombs of certain Cameronians who had fallen under the oppressions of James the Second's brief insanity. Being invited into the manse after dinner to take a glass of whisky punch, "to which he was supposed to have no objections," he joined the minister's party accordingly ; but "he was in bad humour," says Scott, "and, to use his own phrase, had no freedom for conversation. His spirit had been sorely vexed by hearing, in a certain Aberdonian kirk, the psalmody directed by a pitch-pipe or some similar instrument, which was to Old Mortality the abomination of abominations."

From this pleasant tour, so rich in its results, he returned in time to attend the autumnal assizes at Jedburgh, on which occasion he made his first appearance as counsel in a criminal court ; and had the satisfaction of helping a veteran poacher and sheep-stealer to escape through some of the meshes of the law. "You're a lucky scoundrel," Scott whispered to his client, when the verdict was pronounced.—"I'm just o' your mind," quoth the desperado, "and I'll send ye a maukin [viz. a hare] the morn, man." I am not sure whether it was at these assizes

or the next in the same town, that he had less success in the case of a certain notorious housebreaker. The man, however, was well aware that no skill could have baffled the clear evidence against him, and was, after his fashion, grateful for such exertions as had been made in his behalf. He requested the young advocate to visit him once more before he left the place. Scott's curiosity induced him to accept this invitation, and his friend, as soon as they were alone together in the *condemned cell*, said—"I am very sorry, sir, that I have no fee to offer you—so let me beg your acceptance of two bits of advice which may be useful perhaps when you come to have a house of your own. I am done with practice, you see, and here is my legacy. Never keep a large watchdog out of doors—we can always silence them cheaply—indeed if it be a *dog*, 'tis easier than whistling—but tie a little tight yelping terrier within; and secondly, put no trust in nice, clever, gimcrack locks—the only thing that bothers us is a huge old heavy one, no matter how simple the construction,—and the ruder and rustier the key, so much the better for the housekeeper." I remember hearing him tell this story some thirty years after at a Judge's dinner at Jedburgh, and he summed it up with a rhyme—"Ay, ay, my lord" (he addressed his friend Lord Meadowbank)—

" 'Yelping terrier, rusty key,
Was Walter Scott's best Jeddart fee.' "

In the spring of 1794 I find him writing to his friends in Roxburghshire with great exultation about the "good spirit" manifesting itself among the upper classes of the citizens of Edinburgh, and above all, the organisation of a regiment of volunteers, in which his brother Thomas was enrolled as a grenadier, while, as he remarks, his own "unfortunate infirmity" condemned him to be "a mere spectator of the drills." In the course of the same year, the plan of a corps of volunteer light horse was started; and if the recollection of Mr. Skene be accurate, the suggestion originally proceeded from Scott himself, who certainly had a principal share in its subsequent success. He writes to his uncle at Rosebank, requesting him to be on the look-out for a "strong gelding, such as would suit a stalwart dragoon;" and intimating his intention to part with his collection of Scottish coins, rather than not be mounted to his mind. The corps, however, was not organised for some time; and in the meanwhile he had an opportunity of displaying his zeal in a manner which Captain Scott by no means considered as so respectable.

It must, I think, have been while he was indulging his *vagabond* vein, during the autumn of 1795, that Mrs. Barbauld paid her visit to Edinburgh, and entertained a party at Mr. Dugald Stewart's, by reading William Taylor's then unpublished version of Bürger's *Lenore*. In the essay on *Imitation of Popular Poetry*, the reader has a full account of the interest with which Scott heard, some weeks afterwards, a friend's imperfect recollections of this performance; the anxiety with which he sought after a copy of the original German; the delight with which he at length perused it; and how, having just been reading the specimens of ballad poetry introduced into Lewis' romance of *The Monk*, he called to mind the early facility of versification which had lain so long in abeyance, and ventured to promise his friend a rhymed translation of *Lenore* from his own pen. The friend in question was Miss Cranstoun, afterwards Countess of Purgstall, the sister of George Cranstoun (Lord Corehouse). He began the task, he tells us, after supper, and did not retire to bed until he had finished it, having by that time worked himself into a state of excitement which set sleep at defiance.

Next morning, before breakfast, he carried his MS. to Miss Cranstoun, who was not only delighted but astonished at it; for I have seen a letter of hers to a friend in the country, in which she says—"Upon my word, Walter Scott is going to turn out a poet—something of a cross I think between Burns and Gray." The same day he read it also to Sir Alexander Wood, who retains a vivid recollection of the high strain of enthusiasm into which he had been exalted by dwelling on the wild unearthly imagery of the German bard. He read it over to me," says Sir Alexander, "in a very slow and solemn tone, and after we had said a few words about its merits, continued to look at the fire silent and musing for some minutes, until he at length burst out with 'I wish to Heaven I could get a skull and two crossbones.'" Wood said, that if Scott would accompany him to the house of John Bell, the celebrated surgeon, he had no doubt this wish might be easily gratified.* They went thither accordingly on the instant;—Mr. Bell smiled on hearing the object of their visit, and pointing to a closet, at the corner of his library, bade Walter enter and choose. From a well-furnished museum of mortality, he selected forthwith what seemed to him the handsomest skull and pair of crossbones it contained, and wrap-

* Sir. A. Wood was himself the son of a distinguished surgeon in Edinburgh. He married one of the daughters of Sir W. Forbes of Pitsligo—rose in the diplomatic service—and died in 1846.

ping them in his handkerchief, carried the formidable bundle home to George's Square. The trophies were immediately mounted on the top of his little bookcase ; and when Wood visited him, after many years of absence from this country, he found them in possession of a similar position in his dressing-room at Abbotsford.

All this occurred in the beginning of April, 1796. A few days afterwards Scott went to pay a visit at a country house, where he expected to meet the "lady of his love." Jane Anne Cranstoun was in the secret of his attachment, and knew that, however doubtful might be Miss Stuart's feeling on that subject, she had a high admiration of Scott's abilities, and often corresponded with him on literary matters ; so, after he had left Edinburgh, it occurred to her that she might perhaps forward his views in this quarter, by presenting him in the character of a printed author. William Erskine being called in to her councils, a few copies of the ballad were forthwith thrown off in the most elegant style, and one, richly bound and blazoned, followed Scott in the course of a few days to the country. The verses were read and approved of, and Miss Cranstoun at least flattered herself that he had not made his first appearance in types to no purpose.

The affair in which Miss Cranstoun took so lively an interest soon approached its end. It was known, before autumn closed, that the lady of his vows had finally promised her hand to his amiable rival ; and, when the fact was announced, some of those who knew Scott the best, appear to have entertained very serious apprehensions as to the effect which the disappointment might have upon his feelings. For example, one of those brothers of *The Mountain* wrote as follows to another of them, on October 12th, 1796 :—"Mr. Forbes marries Miss Stuart. This is not good news. I always dreaded there was some self-deception on the part of our romantic friend, and I now shudder at the violence of his most irritable and ungovernable mind. Who is it that says, 'Men have died, and worms have eaten them, but not for LOVE' ? I hope sincerely it may be verified on the occasion."

Scott had, however, in all likelihood, digested his agony during the solitary ride in the Highlands to which Miss Cranstoun's last letter alludes.

Rebelling, as usual, against circumstances, Scott seems to have turned with renewed ardour to his literary pursuits ; and in that same October, 1796, he was "prevailed on," as he playfully

expresses it, "by the request of friends, to indulge his own vanity, by publishing the translation of *Lenore*, with that of *The Wild Huntsman*, also from Bürger, in a thin quarto." The little volume, which has no author's name on the title-page, was printed for Manners and Miller of Edinburgh. He had owed his copy of Bürger to a young gentlewoman of high German blood, who in 1795 became the wife of his friend and chief Hugh Scott of Harden. She was daughter of Count Brühl of Martkirchen, long Saxon ambassador at Court of St. James's, by his wife Almeria, Countess-Dowager of Egremont. The young kinsman was introduced to her soon after her arrival at Mertoun, and his attachment to German studies excited her attention and interest. The ballad of *The Wild Huntsman* appears to have been executed during the month that preceded his first publication; and he was thenceforth engaged in a succession of versions from the dramas of Meier Iffland, several of which are still extant in his MS., marked 1796 and 1797. These are all in prose like their originals; but he also versified at the same time some lyrical fragments of Goethe, as, for example, the Morlachian Ballad, *What yonder glimmers so white on the mountain?* and the song from Claudina von Villa Bella. He consulted his friend at Mertoun on all these essays; and I have often heard him say, that among those many "obligations of a distant date which remained impressed on his memory, after a life spent in a constant interchange of friendship and kindness," he counted not as the least the lady's frankness in correcting his Scotticisms, and more especially his Scottish *rhymes*.

His obligations to this lady were indeed various; but I doubt, after all, whether these were the most important. He used to say, that she was the first woman of real fashion that took him up; that she used the privileges of her sex and station in the truest spirit of kindness; set him right as to a thousand little trifles, which no one else would have ventured to notice; and, in short, did for him what no one but an elegant woman can do for a young man, whose early days have been spent in narrow and provincial circles. "When I first saw Sir Walter," she writes to me, "he was about four or five and twenty, but looked much younger. He seemed bashful and awkward; but there were from the first such gleams of superior sense and spirit in his conversation, that I was hardly surprised when, after our acquaintance had ripened a little, I felt myself to be talking with a man of genius. He was most modest about himself, and shewed his little pieces apparently without any consciousness

that they could possess any claim on particular attention. Nothing so easy and good-humoured as the way in which he received any hints I might offer, when he seemed to be tampering with the King's English. I remember particularly how he laughed at himself, when I made him take notice that 'the little two dogs,' in some of his lines, did not please an English ear accustomed to 'the two little dogs.'"

Nor was this the only person at Mertoun who took a lively interest in his pursuits. Harden entered into all the feelings of his beautiful bride on this subject ; and his mother, the Lady Diana Scott, daughter of the last Earl of Marchmont, did so no less. She had conversed, in her early days, with the brightest ornaments of the cycle of Queen Anne, and preserved rich stores of anecdote, well calculated to gratify the curiosity and excite the ambition of a young enthusiast in literature. Lady Diana soon appreciated the minstrel of the clan ; and, surviving to a remarkable age, she had the satisfaction of seeing him at the height of his eminence—the solitary person who could give the author of *Marmion* personal reminiscences of Pope.

With these friends, as well as in his Edinburgh circle, the little anonymous volume found warm favour ; Dugald Stewart, Ramsay of Ochtertyre, and George Chalmers, especially prophesied for it great success.

The anticipations of these gentlemen, that Scott's versions would attract general attention in the south, were not fulfilled. He himself attributes this to the contemporaneous appearance of so many other translations from *Lenore*. "I was coldly received," he says, "by strangers, but my reputation began rather to increase among my own friends ; and on the whole I was more bent to shew the world that it had neglected something worth notice than to be affronted by its indifference ; or rather, to speak candidly, I found pleasure in the literary labours in which I had almost by accident become engaged, and laboured less in the hope of pleasing others, though certainly without despair of doing so, than in pursuit of a new and agreeable amusement to myself."

In his German studies, Scott acquired, about this time, another assistant in Mr. Skene of Rubislaw—a gentleman considerably his junior, who had just returned to Scotland from a residence of several years in Saxony. Their fondness for the same literature, with Scott's eagerness to profit by his new acquaintance's superior attainment in it, opened an intercourse which general similarity of tastes, and I venture to add, in

many of the most important features of character, soon ripened into the familiarity of a tender friendship—"An intimacy," Mr. Skene says, in a paper before me, "of which I shall ever think with so much pride—a friendship so pure and cordial as to have been able to withstand all the vicissitudes of nearly forty years, without ever having sustained even a casual chill from unkind thought or word." Mr. Skene adds—"During the whole progress of his varied life, to that eminent station which he could not but feel he at length held in the estimation, not of his countrymen alone, but of the whole world, I never could perceive the slightest shade of variance from that simplicity of character with which he impressed me on the first hour of our meeting."

Among the common tastes which served to knit these friends together, was their love of horsemanship, in which, as in all other manly exercises, Skene highly excelled; and the fears of a French invasion becoming every day more serious, their thoughts were turned with corresponding zeal to the project of mounted volunteers. "The London Light-horse had set the example," says Mr. Skene; "but in truth it was to Scott's ardour that this force in the North owed its origin. Unable, by reason of his lameness, to serve amongst his friends on foot, he had nothing for it but to rouse the spirit of the moss-trooper, with which he readily inspired all who possessed the means of substituting the sabre for the musket." On February 14th, 1797, these friends and many more met and drew up an offer to serve as a body of volunteer cavalry in Scotland; which was accepted by Government. The organisation of the corps proceeded rapidly; they extended their offer to serve in any part of the island in case of invasion; and this also being accepted, the whole arrangement was shortly completed; when Charles Maitland of Rankeillor was elected Major-Commandant; William Rae of St. Catharine's, Captain; William Forbes of Pitsligo, and James Skene of Rubislaw, Cornets; Walter Scott, Paymaster, Quartermaster, and Secretary. But the treble duties thus devolved on Scott were found to interfere too severely with his other avocations, and Colin Mackenzie of Portmore relieved him from those of paymaster.

CHAPTER III

Tour to the English Lakes—Miss Carpenter—Marriage—Lasswade Cottage—Original Ballads—Monk Lewis—*Goetz of Berlichingen*—James Ballantyne—John Leyden—James Hogg—Sheriffship of Selkirk—Publication of the *Minstrelsy of the Border*. 1797-1803.

AFTER the rising of the Court of Session in July, 1797, Scott set out on a tour to the English lakes, accompanied by his brother John and Adam Fergusson. Their first stage was Halyards in Tweeddale, then inhabited by his friend's father, the philosopher and historian ; and they stayed there for a day or two, in the course of which he had his first and only interview with David Ritchie, the original of his Black Dwarf. Proceeding southwards, the tourists visited Carlisle, Penrith,—the vale of the Eamont, including Mayburgh and Brougham Castle,—Ullswater and Windermere ; and at length fixed their head-quarters at the then peaceful and sequestered little watering-place of Gilsland, making excursions from thence to the various scenes of romantic interest which are commemorated in *The Bridal of Triermain*, and otherwise leading very much the sort of life depicted among the loungers of St. Ronan's Well. Scott was, on his first arrival at Gilsland, not a little engaged with the beauty of one of the young ladies lodged under the same roof with him ; and it was on occasion of a visit in her company to some part of the Roman Wall that he indited his lines—

"Take these flowers which, purple waving,
On the ruin'd rampart grew," etc.

But this was only a passing glimpse of flirtation. A week or so afterwards commenced a more serious affair.

Riding one day with Fergusson, they met, some miles from their quarters, a young lady taking the air on horseback, whom neither of them had previously remarked, and whose appearance instantly struck both so much, that they kept her in view until they had satisfied themselves that she also was one of the party at Gilsland. The same evening there was a ball, at which Captain Scott produced himself in his regimentals, and Fergusson also thought proper to be equipped in the uniform of the Edinburgh Volunteers. There was no little rivalry among the young travellers as to who should first get presented to the unknown beauty of the morning's ride ; but though both the gentlemen in scarlet had the advantage of being dancing partners, their

friend succeeded in handing the fair stranger to supper—and such was his first introduction to Charlotte Margaret Carpenter.

Without the features of a regular beauty, she was rich in personal attractions ; “a form that was fashioned as light as a fay’s ;” a complexion of the clearest and lightest olive ; eyes large, deep-set and dazzling, of the finest Italian brown ; and a profusion of silken tresses, black as the raven’s wing ; her address hovering between the reserve of a pretty young English-woman who has not mingled largely in general society, and a certain natural archness and gaiety that suited well with the accompaniment of a French accent. A lovelier vision, as all who remember her in the bloom of her days have assured me, could hardly have been imagined ; and from that hour the fate of the young poet was fixed.

She was the daughter of Jean Charpentier, of Lyons, a devoted royalist, who held an office under Government, and Charlotte Volere, his wife. She and her only brother, Charles Charpentier, had been educated in the Protestant religion of their mother ; and when their father died, which occurred in the beginning of the Revolution, Madame Charpentier made her escape with her children first to Paris, and then to England, where they found a warm friend and protector in Arthur, the second Marquis of Downshire, who had, in the course of his travels in France, formed an intimate acquaintance with the family, and, indeed, spent some time under their roof. M. Charpentier had, in his first alarm as to the coming Revolution, invested £4,000 in English securities—part in a mortgage upon Lord Downshire’s estates. On the mother’s death, which occurred soon after her arrival in London, this nobleman took on himself the character of sole guardian to her children ; and Charles Charpentier received in due time, through his interest, an appointment in the service of the East India Company, in which he had by this time risen to the lucrative situation of commercial resident at Salem. His sister was now making a little excursion, under the care of the lady who had superintended her education, Miss Jane Nicholson, a daughter of Dr. Nicholson, Dean of Exeter, and grand-daughter of William Nicholson, Bishop of Carlisle, well known as the editor of *The English Historical Library*. To some connexions which the learned prelate’s family had ever since his time kept up in the diocese of Carlisle, Miss Carpenter owed the direction of her summer tour.

Scott remained in Cumberland until the Jedburgh assizes recalled him to his legal duties. On arriving in that town, he

immediately sent for his friend Shortrede, whose *Memorandum* records that the evening of September 30th, 1797, was one of the most joyous he ever spent. "Scott," he says, "was *sair* beside himself about Miss Carpenter;—we toasted her twenty times over—and sat together, he raving about her, until it was one in the morning." He soon returned to Cumberland; and remained there until various difficulties presented by the prudence and prejudices of family connexions had been overcome. It appears that at one stage of the business he had seriously contemplated leaving the bar of Edinburgh, and establishing himself with his bride (I know not in what capacity) in one of the colonies. He attended the Court of Session as usual in November; and was married at Carlisle during the Christmas recess.

Scott carried his bride to a lodging in George Street, Edinburgh; a house which he had taken, not being quite prepared for her reception. The first fortnight was, I believe, sufficient to convince her husband's family that, however rashly he had formed the connexion, she had the sterling qualities of a wife.

Mrs. Scott's arrival was welcomed with unmingled delight by the brothers of *The Mountain*. The two ladies who had formerly given life and grace to their society, were both recently married. Scott's house in South Castle Street (soon after exchanged for one of the same sort in North Castle Street, which he purchased, and inhabited down to 1826) became now what Cranstoun's and Erskine's had been while their accomplished sisters remained with them. The officers of the Light-horse, too, established a club among themselves, supping once a week at each other's houses in rotation. The lady thus found two somewhat different, but both highly agreeable circles ready to receive her with cordial kindness; and the evening hours passed in a round of innocent gaiety, all the arrangements being conducted in a simple and inexpensive fashion, suitable to young people whose days were mostly laborious, and very few of their purses heavy.

In the summer of 1798 Scott hired a cottage at Lasswade, on the Esk, about six miles from Edinburgh. It is a small house, but with one room of good dimensions, which Mrs. Scott's taste set off to advantage at very humble cost—a paddock or two—and a garden (commanding a most beautiful view) in which Scott delighted to train his flowers and creepers. Never, I have heard him say, was he prouder of his handiwork than when he had completed the fashioning of a rustic archway, now overgrown with hoary ivy, by way of ornament to the entrance

from the Edinburgh road. In this retreat they spent some happy summers, receiving the visits of their few chosen friends from the neighbouring city, and wandering at will amidst some of the most romantic scenery that Scotland can boast—Scott's dearest haunt in the days of his boyish ramblings. They had neighbours, too, who were not slow to cultivate their acquaintance. With the Clerks of Pennycuick, with Mackenzie the Man of Feeling, who then occupied the charming villa of Auchendinny, and with Lord Woodhouselee, Scott had from an earlier date been familiar; and it was while at Lasswade that he formed intimacies, even more important in their results, with the noble families of Melville and Buccleuch, both of whom have castles in the same valley.

"Sweet are the paths, O passing sweet,
By Esk's fair streams that run,
O'er airy steep, thro' copsewood deep,
Impervious to the sun;

"From that fair dome where suit is paid
By blast of bugle free,
To Auchendinny's hazle shade,
And haunted Woodhouselee.

"Who knows not Melville's beechy grove,
And Roslin's rocky glen;
Dalkeith, which all the virtues love,
And classic Hawthornden?"

Another verse reminds us that

"There the rapt poet's step may rove;"—

and it was amidst these delicious solitudes that he did produce the pieces which laid the imperishable foundations of all his fame. It was here that, when his warm heart was beating with young and happy love, and his whole mind and spirit were nerved by new motives for exertion—it was here that, in the ripened glow of manhood, he seems to have first felt something of his real strength, and poured himself out in those splendid original ballads which were at once to fix his name.

I must, however, approach these more leisurely. When William Erskine was in London in the spring of this year, he happened to meet in society with Matthew Gregory Lewis, M.P. for Hindon, whose romance of *The Monk*, with the ballads which it included, had made for him, in those barren days, a brilliant reputation. This good-natured fopling, the pet and plaything of certain fashionable circles, was then busy with that miscellany which at length came out in 1801, under the name of

Tales of Wonder, and was beating up in all quarters for contributions. Erskine showed Lewis the versions of *Lenore* and *The Wild Huntsman*; and when he mentioned that his friend had other specimens of the German *diablerie* in his portfolio, the collector anxiously requested that Scott might be enlisted in his cause;—and he, who was perhaps at all times rather disposed to hold popular favour as the surest test of literary merit, and who certainly continued through life to overestimate all talents except his own, considered this invitation as a very flattering compliment. He immediately wrote to Lewis, placing whatever pieces he had translated and imitated from the German *Volkslieder* at his disposal.

In the autumn Lewis made a tour into the north; and Scott told Allan Cunningham, thirty years afterwards, that he thought he had never felt such elation as when the “Monk” invited him to dine with him for the first time at his hotel. Since he gazed on Burns in his seventeenth year, he had seen no one enjoying, by general consent, the fame of a poet; and Lewis, whatever Scott might, on maturer consideration, think of his title to such fame, had certainly done him no small service; for the ballads of *Alonzo the Brave*, etc., had rekindled effectually in his breast the spark of poetical ambition. Lady Charlotte Campbell (now Bury), always distinguished by her passion for letters, was ready, “in pride of rank, in beauty’s bloom,” to do the honours of Scotland to the Lion of Mayfair; and I believe Scott’s first introduction to Lewis took place at one of her ladyship’s parties. But they met frequently, and, among other places, at Dalkeith—as witness one of Scott’s marginal notes, written in 1825, on Lord Byron’s Diary: “Lewis was fonder of great people than he ought to have been, either as a man of talent or as a man of fashion. He had always dukes and duchesses in his mouth, and was pathetically fond of any one that had a title. You would have sworn he had been a *parvenu* of yesterday, yet he had lived all his life in good society. His person was extremely small and boyish—he was indeed the least man I ever saw, to be strictly well and neatly made. I remember a picture of him by Saunders being handed round at Dalkeith House. The artist had ingeniously flung a dark folding-mantle around the form, under which was half-hid a dagger, a dark lantern, or some such cut-throat appurtenance; with all this the features were preserved and ennobled. It passed from hand to hand into that of Henry, Duke of Buccleuch, who, hearing the general voice affirm that it was very like, said

aloud, 'Like Mat Lewis ! Why, that picture's like a MAN !' He looked, and lo, Mat Lewis's head was at his elbow."

Lewis spent a day or two with Scott at Musselburgh, where the yeomanry corps were in quarters. Scott received him in his lodgings, under the roof of an ancient dame, who afforded him much amusement by her daily colloquies with the fishwomen—the *Mucklebackets* of the place. His delight in studying the dialect of these people is well remembered by the survivors of the cavalry, and must have astonished the stranger dandy. While walking about before dinner on one of these days, Mr. Skene's recitation of the German *Kriegslied*, "*Der Abschied's Tag ist da*" (The day of departure is come), delighted both Lewis and the quarter-master ; and the latter produced next morning that spirited little piece in the same measure, which, embodying the volunteer ardour of the time, was forthwith adopted as the troop-song of the Edinburgh Light-horse.

In January, 1799, Mr. Lewis appears negotiating with a bookseller, named Bell, for the publication of Scott's version of Goethe's Tragedy, *Goetz von Berlichingen of the Iron Hand*. Bell seems finally to have purchased the copyright for twenty-five guineas, and twenty-five more to be paid in case of a second edition—which was never called for until long after the copyright had expired. Lewis writes : "I have made him distinctly understand, that, if you accept so small a sum, it will be only because this is your first publication : " the tiny adventure in 1796 had been completely forgotten. The *Goetz* appeared accordingly, with Scott's name on the title-page, in the following February.

In March, 1799, he carried his wife to London, this being the first time that he had seen the metropolis since the days of his infancy. The acquaintance of Lewis served to introduce him to some literary and fashionable society, with which he was much amused ; but his great anxiety was to examine the antiquities of the Tower and Westminster Abbey, and to make some researches among the MSS. of the British Museum. He found his *Goetz* spoken of favourably, on the whole, by the critics of the time ; but it does not appear to have attracted general attention.

He executed about the same time his *House of Aspen*, rather a *rifacimento* than a translation from one of the minor dramatists that had crowded to partake the popularity of *Goetz*. It also was sent to Lewis in London, where, having been read

and commended by the celebrated actress, Mrs. Esten, it was taken up by Kemble, and I believe actually put in rehearsal for the stage. If so, the trial did not encourage further preparation, and the notion was abandoned. The scenes are interspersed with some lyrics, the numbers of which, at least, are worthy of attention. One has the metre—and not a little of the spirit—of the boat-song of Clan-Alpin :—

“Joy to the victors, the sons of old Aspen,
Joy to the race of the battle and scar!” etc. etc.

His return to Edinburgh was accelerated by the tidings of his father's death. This worthy man had had a succession of paralytic attacks, under which, mind as well as body had by degrees been laid quite prostrate. When the first *Chronicles of the Canongate* appeared, a near relation of the family said to me : “I had been out of Scotland for some time, and did not know of my good friend's illness until I reached Edinburgh, a few months before his death. Walter carried me to visit him, and warned me that I should see a great change. I saw the very scene that is here painted of the elder Croftangry's sickroom—not a feature different—poor Anne Scott, the gentlest of creatures, was treated by the fretful patient precisely like this niece.” I have lived to see the curtain rise and fall once more on a like scene.

Lewis's collection did not engross the leisure of this summer. It produced also what Scott justly calls his “first serious attempts in verse ;” and of these, the earliest appears to have been *The Glenfinlas*. Here the scene is laid in the most favourite district of his favourite Perthshire Highlands ; and the Gaelic tradition on which it is founded was far more likely to draw out the secret strength of his genius, as well as to arrest the feelings of his countrymen, than any subject with which the stores of German *diablerie* could have supplied him.

The next of these compositions was, I believe, *The Eve of St. John*, in which Scott re-peoples the tower of Smailholm, the awe-inspiring haunt of his infancy ; and here he touches, for the first time, the one superstition which can still be appealed to with full and perfect effect ; the only one which lingers in minds long since weaned from all sympathy with the machinery of witches and goblins.

Then came *The Grey Brother*, founded on another superstition, which seems to have been almost as ancient as the belief in ghosts ; namely, that the holiest service of the altar cannot

go on in the presence of an unclean person—a heinous sinner unconfessed and unabsolved.

He wrote at the same period the fine chivalrous ballad entitled *The Fire-King*, in which there is more than enough to make us forgive the machinery.

It was in the course of this autumn that he first visited Bothwell Castle, the seat of Archibald Lord Douglas, who had married Lady Francis Scott, sister to Henry Duke of Buccleuch; a woman whose many amiable virtues were combined with extraordinary strength of mind, and who had, from the first introduction of the young poet at Dalkeith, formed high anticipations of his future career. Lady Douglas was one of his dearest friends through life; and now, under her roof, he improved an acquaintance (begun also at Dalkeith) with one whose abilities and accomplishments not less qualified her to estimate him, and who still survives to lament the only event that could have interrupted their cordial confidence—Lady Louisa Stuart, daughter of the celebrated John Earl of Bute. These ladies, who were sisters in mind, feeling, and affection, he visited among scenes the noblest and most interesting that all Scotland can shew—alike famous in history and romance; and he was not unwilling to make Bothwell and Blantyre the subject of another ballad; of which, however, only a first and imperfect draft has been recovered.

One morning, during his visit to Bothwell, was spent on an excursion to the ruins of Craignethan Castle, the seat, in former days, of the great Evandale branch of the house of Hamilton, but now the property of Lord Douglas; and the poet expressed such rapture with the scenery, that his hosts urged him to accept, for his lifetime, the use of a small habitable house, enclosed within the circuit of the ancient walls. This offer was not at once declined; but circumstances occurred before the end of the year which rendered it impossible for him to establish his summer residence in Lanarkshire. The castle of Craignethan is the original of his *Tillietudlem*.

Having again given a week to Liddesdale, in company with Mr. Shortrede, he spent a few days at Rosebank, and was preparing to return to Edinburgh for the winter, when he received a visit which had consequences of importance.

In the early days of Lancelot Whale, he had had for a classfellow Mr. James Ballantyne, the eldest son of a decent shopkeeper in Kelso, and their acquaintance had never been altogether broken off, as Scott's visits to Rosebank were

frequent, and the other had resided for a time in Edinburgh, when pursuing his education with a view to the profession of a solicitor. Mr. Ballantyne had not been successful in his attempts to establish himself in that branch of the law, and was now the printer and editor of a weekly newspaper in his native town. He called at Rosebank one morning, and requested his old acquaintance to supply a few paragraphs on some legal question of the day for his *Kelso Mail*. Scott complied; and carrying his article himself to the printing-office, took with him also some of his recent pieces, designed to appear in Lewis's Collection. With these, especially, as his *Memorandum* says, the "Morlachian fragment after Goethe," Ballantyne was charmed, and he expressed his regret that Lewis's book was so long in appearing. Scott talked of Lewis with rapture; and, after reciting some of his stanzas, said: "I ought to apologise to you for having troubled you with anything of my own when I had things like this for your ear."—"I felt at once," says Ballantyne, "that his own verses were far above what Lewis could ever do, and though, when I said this, he dissented, yet he seemed pleased with the warmth of my approbation." At parting, Scott threw out a casual observation, that he wondered his old friend did not try to get some little booksellers' work, "to keep his types in play during the rest of the week." Ballantyne answered, that such an idea had not before occurred to him—that he had no acquaintance with the Edinburgh "trade;" but, if he had, his types were good, and he thought he could afford to work more cheaply than town-printers. Scott, "with his good-humoured smile," said—"You had better try what you can do. You have been praising my little ballads; suppose you print off a dozen copies or so of as many as will make a pamphlet, sufficient to let my Edinburgh acquaintances judge of your skill for themselves." Ballantyne assented; and I believe exactly twelve copies of *William and Ellen*, *The Fire-King*, *The Chase*, and a few more of those pieces, were thrown off accordingly, with the title (alluding to the long delay of Lewis's Collection) of *Apology for Tales of Terror—1799*. This first specimen of a press, afterwards so celebrated, pleased Scott; and he said to Ballantyne—"I have been for years collecting old Border ballads, and I think I could, with little trouble, put together such a selection from them as might make a neat little volume, to sell for four or five shillings. I will talk to some of the booksellers about it when I get to Edinburgh,

and if the thing goes on, you shall be the printer." Ballantyne highly relished the proposal; and the result of this little experiment changed wholly the course of his worldly fortunes, as well as of his friend's.

Mr. Ballantyne, after recounting this conversation, says: "I do not believe that even at this time he seriously contemplated giving himself much to literature;" but I think a letter addressed to Ballantyne, in the following April, affords considerable reason to doubt the accuracy of this impression. Scott there states, that he and another acquaintance of the printer's had been consulting together as to the feasibility of "no less than a total plan of migration from Kelso to Edinburgh;" and proceeds to say, that, in his opinion, there was then a very favourable opening in Edinburgh for a new printing establishment, conducted by a man of talent and education. He mentions—besides the chance of a share in the printing of law-papers—firstly, a weekly newspaper of the higher class; secondly, a monthly magazine; and thirdly, an annual register, as undertakings all likely to be well received; suggests that the general publishing trade itself was in a very languid condition; and ends with a hint that "pecuniary assistance, if wanted, might (no doubt) be procured on terms of a share, or otherwise."

Shortly after the commencement of the Winter Session, the office of Sheriff-depute of Selkirkshire became vacant by the death of an early ally of Scott's, Andrew Plummer of Middlestead, a scholar and antiquary, who had entered with zeal into his ballad researches, and whose name occurs accordingly more than once in the notes to *The Border Minstrelsy*. Perhaps the community of their tastes may have had some part in suggesting to the Duke of Buccleuch, that Scott might fitly succeed Mr. Plummer in the magistrature.

His appointment to the *Sheriffship* bears date December 16th, 1799. It secured him an annual salary of £300; an addition to his resources which at once relieved his mind from whatever degree of anxiety he might have felt in considering the prospect of an increasing family, along with the ever-precarious chances of a profession, in the daily drudgery of which it is impossible to suppose that he ever could have found much pleasure. The duties of the office were far from heavy: the territory, small, peaceful, and pastoral, was in great part the property of the Duke of Buccleuch; and he turned with redoubled zeal to his project of editing the ballads, many of the best of which

belonged to this very district of his favourite Border—those “tales” which, as the Dedication of *The Minstrelsy* expresses it, had “in elder times celebrated the prowess and cheered the halls” of his noble patron’s ancestors.

Scott found able assistants in the completion of his design. Richard Heber (long Member of Parliament for the University of Oxford) happened to spend this winter in Edinburgh, and was welcomed, as his talents and accomplishments entitled him to be, by the cultivated society of the place. With Scott, his multifarious learning, particularly his profound knowledge of the literary monuments of the Middle Ages, soon drew him into habits of close alliance; the stores of his library, even then extensive, were freely laid open, and his own oral commentaries were not less valuable. But through him Scott made acquaintance with a person still more qualified to give effectual aid in this undertaking. Few who read these pages can be unacquainted with the leading facts in the history of John Leyden. Few can need to be reminded that this extraordinary man, born in a shepherd’s cottage in one of the wildest valleys of Roxburghshire, and of course almost entirely self-educated, had, before he attained his nineteenth year, confounded the doctors of Edinburgh by the portentous mass of his acquisitions in almost every department of learning. He had set the extremest penury at utter defiance, or rather he had never been conscious that it could operate as a bar; for bread and water, and access to books and lectures, comprised all within the bounds of his wishes; and thus he toiled and battled at the gates of science after science, until his unconquerable perseverance carried everything before it; and yet with this monastic abstemiousness and iron hardness of will, perplexing those about him by manners and habits in which it was hard to say whether the moss-trooper or the schoolman of former days most prevailed. He was at heart a poet.

Archibald Constable, in after-life one of the most eminent of British publishers, was at this period the keeper of a small bookshop, into which few but the poor students of Leyden’s order had hitherto found their way. Heber, in the course of his bibliomanical prowlings, discovered that it contained some of

“The small old volumes, dark with tarnished gold,”

which were already the Delilahs of his imagination; and, moreover, that the young bookseller had himself a strong taste for such charmers. Frequenting the place, accordingly, he ob-

served with some curiosity the countenance and gestures of another daily visitant, who came not to purchase, evidently, but to pore over the more recondite articles—often balanced for hours on a ladder with a folio in his hand like Dominie Sampson. The English virtuoso was on the look-out for any books or MSS. that might be of use to the editor of the projected *Minstrelsy*, and some casual colloquy led to the discovery that this new stranger was, amidst the endless labyrinth of his lore, a master of legend and tradition—an enthusiastic collector and skilful expounder of these very Border ballads. Scott heard with much interest Heber's account of his odd acquaintance, and found, when introduced, the person whose initials, affixed to a series of pieces in verse, chiefly translations from Greek, Latin, and the northern languages, scattered, during the last three or four years, over the pages of the *Edinburgh Magazine*, had often much excited his curiosity, as various indications pointed out the Scotch Border to be the native district of this unknown "J. L."

These new friendships led to a great change in Leyden's position, purposes, and prospects. He was presently received into the best society of Edinburgh, where his uncouthness of demeanour does not seem to have at all interfered with the general appreciation of his genius, his endowments, and amiable virtues. Fixing his ambition on the East, where he hoped to rival the achievements of Sir William Jones, he at length, about the beginning of 1802, obtained the promise of some literary appointment in the East India Company's service; but when the time drew near, it was discovered that the patronage of the season had been exhausted, with the exception of one *surgeon-assistant's* commission—which had been with difficulty secured for him by Mr. William Dundas; who, moreover, was obliged to inform him, that if he accepted it, he must be qualified to pass his medical trials within six months. This news, which would have crushed any other man's hopes to the dust, was only a welcome fillip to the ardour of Leyden. He that same hour grappled with a new science in full confidence that whatever ordinary men could do in three or four years, his energy could accomplish in as many months; took his degree accordingly in the beginning of 1803, having just before published his beautiful poem, *The Scenes of Infancy*; sailed to India; raised for himself, within seven short years, the reputation of the most marvellous of Orientalists; and died, in the midst of the proudest hopes, at the same age with Burns and Byron, in 1811.

But to return :—Leyden was enlisted by Scott in the service of Lewis, and immediately contributed a ballad, called *The Elf-King*, to the *Tales of Terror*. Those highly-spirited pieces, *The Count of Keeldor*, *Lord Soulis*, and *The Mermaid*, were furnished for the original department of Scott's own collection : and the *Dissertation on Fairies*, prefixed to its second volume, "although arranged and digested by the editor, abounds with instances of such curious reading as Leyden only had read, and was originally compiled by him ;" but not the least of his labours was in the collection of the old ballads themselves. When he first conversed with Ballantyne on the subject of the proposed work, and the printer signified his belief that a single volume of moderate size would be sufficient for the materials, Leyden exclaimed—"Dash it, does Mr. Scott mean another thin thing like *Goetz of Berlichingen* ? I have more than that in my head myself : we shall turn out three or four such volumes at least." He went to work stoutly in the realisation of these wider views. "In this labour," says Scott, "he was equally interested by friendship for the editor, and by his own patriotic zeal for the honour of the Scottish borders ; and both may be judged of from the following circumstance. An interesting fragment had been obtained of an ancient historical ballad ; but the remainder, to the great disturbance of the editor and his coadjutor, was not to be recovered. Two days afterwards, while the editor was sitting with some company after dinner, a sound was heard at a distance like that of the whistling of a tempest through the torn rigging of the vessel which scuds before it. The sounds increased as they approached more near ; and Leyden (to the great astonishment of such of the guests as did not know him) burst into the room, chanting the desiderated ballad with the most enthusiastic gesture, and all the energy of what he used to call the *saw-tones* of his voice. It turned out that he had walked between forty and fifty miles and back again, for the sole purpose of visiting an old person who possessed this precious remnant of antiquity."

During the years 1800 and 1801, *The Minstrelsy* formed its editor's chief occupation—a labour of love truly, if ever such there was ; but neither this nor his sheriffship interfered with his regular attendance at the Bar, the abandonment of which was all this while as far as it ever had been from his imagination, or that of any of his friends. He continued to have his summer headquarters at Lasswade ; and Sir John Stoddart, who visited him there in the course of his Scottish tour (published in 1801),

dwells on "the simple unostentatious elegance of the cottage, and the domestic picture which he there contemplated—a man of native kindness and cultivated talent, passing the intervals of a learned profession amidst scenes highly favourable to his poetic inspirations, not in churlish and rustic solitude, but in the daily exercise of the most precious sympathies as a husband, a father, and a friend." His means of hospitality were now much enlarged, and the cottage on a Saturday and Sunday at least, was seldom without visitors.

Among other indications of greater ease in his circumstances, which I find in his letter-book, he writes to Heber, after his return to London in May, 1800, to request his good offices on behalf of Mrs. Scott, who had "set her heart on a phaeton, at once strong, and low, and handsome, and not to cost more than thirty guineas;" which combination of advantages Heber seems to have found by no means easy of attainment. The phaeton was, however, discovered; and its springs must soon have been put to a sufficient trial, for this was "the first wheeled carriage that ever penetrated into Liddesdale"—namely, in August, 1800. The friendship of the Buccleuch family now placed better means of research at his disposal, and Lord Dalkeith had taken special care that there should be a band of pioneers in waiting when he reached Hermitage.

Though he had not given up Lasswade, his sheriffship now made it necessary for him that he should be frequently in Ettrick Forest. On such occasions he took up his lodgings in the little inn at Cloverford, a favourite fishing station on the road from Edinburgh to Selkirk. From this place he could ride to the county town whenever business required his presence, and he was also within a few miles of the vales of Yarrow and Ettrick, where he obtained large accessions to his store of ballads. It was in one of these excursions that, penetrating beyond St. Mary's lake, he found a hospitable reception at the farm of Blackhouse, situated on the Douglas-burn, then tenanted by a remarkable family—that of William Laidlaw. He was then a very young man, but the extent of his acquirements was already as noticeable as the vigour and originality of his mind; and their correspondence, where "Sir" passes, at a few bounds, through "Dear Sir," and "Dear Mr. Laidlaw," to "Dear Willie," shews how speedily this new acquaintance had warmed into a very tender affection. Laidlaw's zeal about the ballads was repaid by Scott's anxious endeavours to get him removed from a sphere for which, he writes, "it is no flattery to say

that you are much too good." It was then, and always continued to be, his opinion, that his friend was particularly qualified for entering with advantage on the study of the medical profession; but such designs, if Laidlaw himself ever took them up seriously, were not ultimately persevered in; and I question whether any worldly success could, after all, have overbalanced the retrospect of an honourable life spent happily in the open air of Nature, amidst scenes the most captivating to the eye of genius, and in the intimate confidence of, perhaps, the greatest of contemporary minds.

James Hogg spent ten years of his life in the service of Mr. Laidlaw's father, but he had passed into that of another sheep-farmer in a neighbouring valley, before Scott first visited Blackhouse. William Laidlaw and Hogg were, however, most intimate friends, and the former took care that Scott should see, without delay, one whose fondness for the minstrelsy of the Forest was equal to his own, and whose aged mother was celebrated for having by heart several ballads in a more perfect form than any other inhabitant of the vale of Ettrick. The personal history of James Hogg must have interested Scott even more than any acquisition of that sort which he owed to this acquaintance with, perhaps, the most remarkable man that ever wore the *maud* of a shepherd. Under the garb, aspect, and bearing of a rude peasant—and rude enough he was in most of these things, even after no inconsiderable experience of society—Scott found a brother poet, a true son of Nature and genius, hardly conscious of his powers. He had taught himself to write by copying the letters of a printed book as he lay watching his flock on the hill-side, and had probably reached the utmost pitch of his ambition, when he first found that his artless rhymes could touch the heart of the ewe-milker who partook the shelter of his mantle during the passing storm. As yet his naturally kind and simple character had not been exposed to any of the dangerous flatteries of the world; his heart was pure, his enthusiasm buoyant as that of a happy child; and well as Scott knew that reflection, sagacity, wit, and wisdom, were scattered abundantly among the humblest rangers of these pastoral solitudes, there was here a depth and a brightness that filled him with wonder, combined with a quaintness of humour, and a thousand little touches of absurdity, which afforded him more entertainment, as I have often heard him say, than the best comedy that ever set the pit in a roar.

Scott spent the Christmas of 1801 at Hamilton Palace, in

Lanarkshire. To Lady Anne Hamilton he had been introduced by her friend, Lady Charlotte Campbell, and both the late and present Dukes of Hamilton appear to have partaken of Lady Anne's admiration for *Glenfinlas* and *The Eve of St. John*. A morning's ramble to the majestic ruins of the old baronial castle on the precipitous banks of the Evan, and among the adjoining remains of the primeval Caledonian forest, suggested to him a ballad, not inferior in execution to any he had hitherto produced, and especially interesting as the first in which he grapples with the world of picturesque incident unfolded in the authentic annals of Scotland. With the magnificent localities before him he skilfully interwove the daring assassination of the Regent Murray by one of the clansmen of "the princely Hamilton." Had the subject been taken up in after-years, we might have had another *Marmion* or *Heart of Mid-Lothian*; for in *Cadyow Castle* we have the materials and outline of more than one of the noblest of ballads.

According to the original intention, the *Sir Tristrem*, an imperfect romance, ascribed to Thomas of Ercildoune, the famous old seer and bard of the Border, was to have had a prominent place in the first *livraison* of *The Minstrelsy*; but from the rapid accumulation of matter for notes, as well as of unprinted ballads, this plan was dropped. The *Cadyow Castle* too, was ready, but "two volumes," as Ballantyne says, "were already full to overflowing;" so it also was reserved for a third.

Volumes I. and II. appeared in January, 1802, from the respectable house of Cadell and Davies in the Strand; and, owing to the cold reception of Lewis's *Tales of Wonder*, which had come forth a year earlier, these may be said to have first introduced Scott as an original writer to the English public.

The reception of the first volumes elated naturally their printer, whom George Ellis dubs "The Bulmer of Kelso." He also went up to London to cultivate acquaintance with publishers, and on his return writes thus to his employer: "I shall ever think the printing the Scottish *Minstrelsy* one of the most fortunate circumstances of my life. I have gained, not lost by it, in a pecuniary light; and the prospects it has been the means of opening to me, may advantageously influence my future destiny. I can never be sufficiently grateful for the interest you unceasingly take in my welfare. One thing is clear—that Kelso cannot be my abiding-place for aye." The great bookseller, Longman, repaired to Scotland soon

after this, and made an offer for the copyright of *The Minstrelsy*, the third volume included. This was accepted, and it was at last settled that *Sir Tristrem* should appear in a separate shape. In July Scott proceeded to the Borders with Leyden.

Next spring, Scott hurried up to London as soon as the Court rose, in hopes of seeing Leyden once more before he left England; but he came too late. He thus writes to Ballantyne, on April, 21st 1803: "I have to thank you for the accuracy with which *The Minstrelsy* is thrown off. Longman and Rees are delighted with the printing. I mean this note to be added by way of advertisement:—'In the press, and will speedily be published, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, by Walter Scott, Esq., Editor of *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. Also *Sir Tristrem, a Metrical Romance*, by Thomas of Ercildoune, called the Rhymer, edited from an ancient MS., with a Introduction and Notes, by Walter Scott, Esq.' Will you cause such a thing to be appended in your own way and fashion?"

This letter is dated "No. 15 Piccadilly, West,"—he and Mrs. Scott being there domesticated under the roof of the late M. Charles Dumergue, a man of superior abilities and excellent education, well known as surgeon-dentist to the royal family—who had been intimately acquainted with the Charpentiers in France, and warmly befriended Mrs. Scott's mother on her first arrival in England. M. Dumergue's house was, throughout the whole period of the emigration, liberally opened to the exiles of his native country; nor did some of the noblest of those unfortunate refugees scruple to make a free use of his purse, as well as of his hospitality. Here Scott met much highly interesting French society, and until a child of his own was established in London, he never thought of taking up his abode anywhere else, as often as he had occasion to be in town.

The letter is addressed to "Mr. James Ballantyne, printer, Abbey-hill, Edinburgh;" which shews, that before the third volume of *The Minstrelsy* passed through the press, the migration recommended two years earlier had at length taken place. "It was about the end of 1802," says Ballantyne, "that I closed with a plan so congenial to my wishes. I removed, bag and baggage, to Edinburgh, finding accommodation for two presses, and a proof one, in the precincts of Holyrood-house, then deriving new lustre and interest from the recent arrival of the royal exiles of France. In these obscure premises some

of the most beautiful productions of what we called *The Border Press* were printed." The *Memorandum* states, that Scott having renewed his hint as to pecuniary assistance, as soon as the printer found his finances straitened, "a liberal loan was advanced accordingly."

From thence they proceeded to Oxford, accompanied by Heber; and it was on this occasion that Scott first saw his friend's brother, Reginald, in after-days the apostolic Bishop of Calcutta. He had just been declared the successful candidate for that year's poetical prize, and read to Scott at breakfast, in Brazen Nose College, the MS. of his *Palestine*. Scott observed that, in the verses on Solomon's Temple, one striking circumstance had escaped him, namely, that no tools were used in its erection. Reginald retired for a few minutes to the corner of the room, and returned with the beautiful lines:—

"No hammer fell, no ponderous axes rung,
Like some tall palm the mystic fabric sprung.
Majestic silence," etc.

After inspecting the University and Blenheim, Scott returned to Edinburgh, where the completed *Minstrelsy* was published in the end of May. The reprint of the 1st and 2nd volumes went to 1,000 copies—of volume third Messrs. Longman had ordered 1,500. A complete edition of 1,250 copies followed in 1806; a fourth, also of 1,250, in 1810; a fifth, of 1,500, in 1812; a sixth, of 500, in 1820; and since then it has been incorporated in Scott's *Collected Poetry*. Of the Continental and American editions I can say nothing, except that they have been very numerous. The book was soon translated into German, Danish, and Swedish; and the structure of those languages being very favourable to the undertaking, *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* has thus become widely naturalised among nations themselves rich in similar treasures of legendary lore.

CHAPTER IV

Contributions to *The Edinburgh Review*—Wordsworth—Hogg—*Sir Tristrem*—Removal to Ashestiel—Mungo Park—Publication of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*—Partnership with James Ballantyne—Visit to London—Appointment as Clerk of Session. 1804-1806.

SHORTLY after the complete *Minstrelsy* issued from the press, Scott made his first appearance as a reviewer. *The Edinburgh Review* had been commenced in October, 1802, under the

superintendence of the Rev. Sidney Smith, with whom, during his short residence in Scotland, he had lived on terms of great kindness and familiarity. Mr. Smith soon resigned the editorship to Mr. Jeffrey, who had by this time been for several years among the most valued of Scott's friends and companions at the Bar; and, the new journal being far from committing itself to violent politics at the outset, he appreciated the brilliant talents regularly engaged in it far too highly, not to be well pleased with the opportunity of occasionally exercising his pen in its service. His first contribution was an article on Southey's *Amadis of Gaul*. The reader may now trace the sequence of his articles in the Collective Edition of his *Miscellaneous Prose* (1835).

During the summer of 1803, his chief literary work was on the *Sir Tristrem*, but *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* made progress at intervals—mostly, it would seem, when he was in quarters with his troop of horse, and necessarily without his books of reference. The resumption of the war (after the short peace of Amiens) had given renewed animation to the volunteers, and their spirit was kept up during two or three years more by the unintermitted threats of invasion.

It was in that autumn that Scott first saw Wordsworth. Their common acquaintance, Stoddart, had so often talked of them to each other, that they met as if they had not been strangers; and they parted friends.

Mr. and Miss Wordsworth had just completed their tour in the Highlands, of which so many incidents have since been immortalised, both in the poet's verse and in the hardly less poetical prose of his sister's *Diary*. On the morning of September 17th, having left their carriage at Roslin, they walked down the valley to Lasswade, and arrived there before Mr. and Mrs. Scott had risen. "We were received," Mr. Wordsworth has told me, "with that frank cordiality which, under whatever circumstances I afterwards met him, always marked his manners; and, indeed, I found him then in every respect—except, perhaps, that his animal spirits were somewhat higher—precisely the same man that you knew him in later life; the same lively, entertaining conversation, full of anecdote, and averse from disquisition; the same unaffected modesty about himself; the same cheerful and benevolent and hopeful views of man and the world. He partly read and partly recited, sometimes in an enthusiastic style of chant, the first four cantos of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*; and the novelty of the manners,

the clear picturesque descriptions, and the easy glowing energy of much of the verse, greatly delighted me."

After this he walked with the tourists to Roslin, and promised to meet them in two days at Melrose. The night before they reached Melrose they slept at the little quiet inn of Clovenford, where, on mentioning his name, they were received with all sorts of attention and kindness,—the landlady observing that Mr. Scott, "who was a very clever gentleman," was an old friend of the house, and usually spent a good deal of time there during the fishing season; but, indeed, says Mr. Wordsworth, "wherever we named him, we found the word acted as an *open sesame*; and I believe that, in the character of the *Sheriff's* friends, we might have counted on a hearty welcome under any roof in the Border country."

He met them at Melrose on the 19th, and escorted them through the Abbey, pouring out his rich stores of history and tradition. They then dined together at the inn; but Miss Wordsworth observed that there was some difficulty about arranging matters for the night, "the landlady refusing to settle anything until she had ascertained from the *Sheriff himself* that he had no objection to sleep in the same room with *William*." Scott was thus far on his way to the Circuit Court at Jedburgh, in his capacity of Sheriff, and there his new friends again joined him; but he begged that they would not enter the court, "for," said he, "I really would not like you to see the sort of figure I cut there." They did see him casually, however, in his cocked hat and sword, marching in the Judge's procession to the sound of one cracked trumpet, and were then not surprised that he should have been a little ashamed of the whole ceremonial. He introduced to them his friend William Laidlaw, who was attending the court as a juryman, and who, having read some of Wordsworth's verses in a newspaper, was exceedingly anxious to be of the party, when they explored at leisure, all the law-business being over, the beautiful valley of the Jed, and the ruins of the Castle of Fernieherst, the original fastness of the noble family of Lothian. The grove of stately ancient elms about and below the ruin was seen to great advantage in a fine, grey, breezy autumnal afternoon; and Mr. Wordsworth happened to say, "What life there is in trees!"—"How different," said Scott, "was the feeling of a very intelligent young lady, born and bred in the Orkney Islands, who lately came to spend a season in this neighbourhood! She told me nothing in the mainland scenery had so much disappointed her

as woods and trees. She found them so dead and lifeless, that she could never help pining after the eternal motion and variety of the ocean. And so back she has gone, and I believe nothing will ever tempt her from *the wind-swept Orcades* again."

Next day they proceeded up the Teviot to Hawick, Scott entertaining his friends with some legend or ballad connected with every tower or rock they passed. He made them stop to admire particularly a scene of deep and solemn retirement, called *Horne's Pool*, from its having been the daily haunt of a contemplative schoolmaster, known to him in his youth; and at Kirkton he pointed out the little village schoolhouse, to which his friend Leyden had walked six or eight miles every day across the moors, "when a poor barefooted boy." From Hawick, where they spent the night, he led them next morning to the brow of a hill, from which they could see a wide range of the Border mountains, Ruberslaw, the Carter, and the Cheviots; and lamented that neither their engagements nor his own would permit them to make at this time an excursion into the wilder glens of Liddesdale, "where," said he, "I have strolled so often and so long, that I may say I have a home in every farm-house." "And, indeed," adds Mr. Wordsworth, "wherever we went with him, he seemed to know everybody, and everybody to know and like him." Here they parted,—the Wordsworths to pursue their journey homeward by Eskdale—he to return to Lasswade.

As to his despondence concerning the Bar, I confess his *fee-book* indicates less ground for such a feeling than I should have expected to discover there. His practice brought him, as we have seen, in the session of 1796-7, £144 10s.;—its proceeds fell down, in the first year of his married life, to £79 17s.; but they rose again, in 1798-9, to £135 9s.; amounted, in 1799-1800, to £129 13s.; in 1800-1, to £170; in 1801-2, to £202 12s.; and in the session that had just elapsed (which is the last included in the record before me), to £228 18s.

I have already said something of the beginning of Scott's acquaintance with "the Ettrick Shepherd." Shortly after their first meeting, Hogg, coming into Edinburgh with a flock of sheep, was seized with a sudden ambition of seeing himself in type, and he wrote out that same night a few ballads, already famous in the Forest, which some obscure bookseller gratified him by printing accordingly; but they appear to have attracted no notice beyond their original sphere. Hogg then made an excursion into the Highlands, in quest of employment as over-

seer of some extensive sheep-farm ; but, though Scott had furnished him with strong recommendations to various friends, he returned without success. He printed an account of his travels, however, in a set of letters in the *Scots Magazine*, which, though exceedingly rugged and uncouth, had abundant traces of the native shrewdness and genuine poetical feeling of this remarkable man. The next time that business carried him to Edinburgh, Scott invited him to dinner, in company with Laidlaw, who happened also to be in town, and some other admirers of the rustic genius. When Hogg entered the drawing-room, Mrs. Scott, being at the time in a delicate state of health, was reclining on a sofa. The Shepherd, after being presented, and making his best bow, took possession of another sofa placed opposite to hers, and stretched himself thereupon at all his length ; for, as he said afterwards, "I thought I could never do wrong to copy the lady of the house." As his dress at this period was precisely that in which any ordinary herdsman attends cattle to the market, and his hands, moreover, bore most legible marks of a recent sheep-smearing, the lady of the house did not observe with perfect equanimity the novel usage to which her chintz was exposed. The Shepherd, however, remarked nothing of all this—dined heartily and drank freely, and, by jest, anecdote, and song, afforded plentiful merriment. As the liquor operated, his familiarity increased ; from Mr. Scott, he advanced to "Sherra," and thence to "Scott," "Walter," and "Wattie,"—until, at supper, he fairly convulsed the whole party by addressing Mrs. Scott as "Charlotte."

The collection entitled *The Mountain Bard* was eventually published by Constable, in consequence of Scott's recommendation, and this work did at last afford Hogg no slender share of the reputation for which he had so long thirsted. It is not my business, however, to pursue the details of his story.

Sir Tristrem was at length published on May 2nd, 1804, by Constable, who, however, expected so little popularity for the work, that the edition consisted only of 150 copies. These were sold at a high price (two guineas), otherwise they would not have been enough to cover the expenses of paper and printing.

In the course of the preceding summer, the Lord Lieutenant of Selkirkshire complained of Scott's military zeal as interfering sometimes with the discharge of his shrieval functions, and took occasion to remind him, that the law, requiring every Sheriff to reside at least four months in the year within his own jurisdiction, had not hitherto been complied with. While,

in consequence of a renewal of this hint, he was seeking about for some "lodge in the Forest," his kinsman of Harden suggested that the tower of Auld Wat (the *Stammschloss* of their family) might be refitted, so as to serve his purpose ; and he received the proposal with enthusiastic delight. On a more careful inspection of the localities, however, he became sensible that he would be practically at a greater distance from county business of all kinds at Harden, than if he were to continue at Lasswade. Just at this time, the house of Ashestiel, situated on the southern bank of the Tweed, a few miles from Selkirk, became vacant by the death of its proprietor, Colonel Russell, who had married a sister of Scott's mother, and the consequent dispersion of the family. The young laird of Ashestiel, his cousin, was then in India ; and the Sheriff took a lease of the house, with a small farm adjoining.

On June 10th, 1804, died, at his seat of Rosebank, Captain Robert Scott, the affectionate uncle whose name has often occurred in this narrative. "He was," says his nephew to Ellis, on the 18th, "a man of universal benevolence and great kindness towards his friends, and to me individually."

Scott sold Rosebank in the course of the year for £5,000. This bequest made an important change in his pecuniary position, and influenced accordingly the arrangements of his future life. Independently of practice at the Bar, and of literary profits, he was now, with his little patrimony, his Sheriffship, and about £200 per annum arising from the stock ultimately settled on his wife, in possession of a fixed revenue of nearly £1,000 a year.

Ashestiel will be visited by many for his sake, as long as *Waverley* and *Marmion* are remembered. A more beautiful situation for the residence of a poet could not be conceived. The house was then a small one, but, compared with the cottage at Lasswade, its accommodations were amply sufficient. You approached it through an old-fashioned garden, with holly hedges, and broad, green, terrace walks. On one side, close under the windows, is a deep ravine, clothed with venerable trees, down which a mountain rivulet is heard, more than seen, in its progress to the Tweed. The river itself is separated from the high bank on which the house stands only by a narrow meadow of the richest verdure. Opposite, and all around, are the green hills. The valley there is narrow, and the aspect in every direction is that of perfect pastoral repose. The heights immediately behind are those which divide the Tweed from the

Yarrow ; and the latter celebrated stream lies within an easy ride, in the course of which the traveller passes through a variety of the finest mountain scenery in the south of Scotland. No town is within seven miles but Selkirk, which was then still smaller and quieter than it is now ; there was hardly even a gentleman's family within visiting distance, except at Yair, a few miles lower on the Tweed, the ancient seat of the Pringles of Whytbank, and at Bowhill, between the Yarrow and Ettrick, where the Earl of Dalkeith used occasionally to inhabit a small shooting-lodge, which has since grown into a ducal residence. The country all around, with here and there an insignificant exception, belongs to the Buccleuch estate ; so that, whichever way he chose to turn, the bard of the clan had ample room and verge enough for every variety of field sport ; and being then in the prime vigour of manhood, he was not slow to profit by these advantages. Meantime, the concerns of his own little farm, and the care of his absent relation's woods, gave him healthful occupation in the intervals of the chase ; and he had long, solitary evenings for the uninterrupted exercise of his pen ; perhaps, on the whole, better opportunities of study than he had ever enjoyed before, or was to meet with elsewhere in later days.

When he first examined Ashestiel, with a view to being his cousin's tenant, he thought of taking home James Hogg to superintend the sheep-farm, and keep watch over the house also during the winter. I am not able to tell exactly in what manner this proposal fell to the ground ; but in truth the Sheriff had hardly been a week in possession of his new domains, before he made acquaintance with a character much better suited to his purpose than James Hogg ever could have been. I mean honest Thomas Purdie, his faithful servant, his affectionately devoted humble friend from this time until death parted them. Tom was first brought before him, in his capacity of Sheriff, on a charge of poaching, when the poor fellow gave such a touching account of his circumstances,—a wife, and I know not how many children, depending on his exertions—work scarce and grouse abundant,—and all this with a mixture of odd sly humour,—that the Sheriff's heart was moved. Tom escaped the penalty of the law—was taken into employment as shepherd, and shewed such zeal, activity, and shrewdness in that capacity, that Scott never had any occasion to repent of the step he soon afterwards took, in promoting him to the position which had been originally offered to James Hogg.

It was also about the same time that he took into his service as coachman Peter Mathieson, brother-in-law to Thomas Purdie, another faithful servant, who never afterwards left him, and still (1848) survives his kind master. Scott's awkward management of the little phaeton had exposed his wife to more than one perilous overturn, before he agreed to set up a close carriage, and call in the assistance of this steady charioteer.

During this autumn Scott formed the personal acquaintance of Mungo Park, the celebrated victim of African discovery. On his return from his first expedition, Park endeavoured to establish himself as a medical practitioner in the town of Hawick, but the drudgeries of that calling in such a district soon exhausted his ardent temper, and he was now living in seclusion in his native cottage at Fowlsheils on the Yarrow, nearly opposite Newark Castle. His brother, Archibald Park (then tenant of a large farm on the Buccleuch estate), a man remarkable for strength both of mind and body, introduced the traveller to the Sheriff. They soon became much attached to each other; and Scott supplied some interesting anecdotes of their brief intercourse to Mr. Wishaw, the editor of Park's *Posthumous Journal*, with which I shall blend a few minor circumstances, gathered from him in conversation long afterwards.

Calling one day at Fowlsheils, and not finding Park at home, Scott walked in search of him along the banks of the Yarrow, which in that neighbourhood passes over various ledges of rock, forming deep pools and eddies between them. Presently he discovered his friend standing alone on the bank, plunging one stone after another into the water, and watching anxiously the bubbles as they rose to the surface. "This," said Scott, "appears but an idle amusement for one who has seen so much stirring adventure." "Not so idle, perhaps, as you suppose," answered Mungo. "This was the manner in which I used to ascertain the depth of a river in Africa before I ventured to cross it—judging whether the attempt would be safe, by the time the bubbles of air took to ascend." At this time Park's intention of a second expedition had never been revealed to Scott; but he instantly formed the opinion that these experiments on the Yarrow were connected with some such purpose.

To return to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*: Ellis, understanding it to be now nearly ready for the press, writes to Scott, urging him to set it forth with some engraved illustrations—if

possible, after Flaxman, whose splendid designs from Homer had shortly before made their appearance. He answers, August 21st—"I should fear Flaxman's genius is too classic to stoop to body forth my Gothic Borderers. Would there not be some risk of their resembling the antique of Homer's heroes, rather than the iron race of Salvator? I should like at least to be at his elbow when at work. I wish very much I could have sent you *The Lay* while in MS., to have had the advantage of your opinion and corrections. But Ballantyne galled my kibes so severely during an unusual fit of activity, that I gave him the whole story in a sort of pet both with him and with it."

In the first week of January, 1805, *The Lay* was published: and its success at once decided that literature should form the main business of Scott's life. I shall not mock the reader with many words as to the merits of a poem which has now kept its place for nearly half a century; but one or two additional remarks on the history of the composition may be pardoned.

It is curious to trace the small beginnings and gradual development of his design. The lovely Countess of Dalkeith hears a wild, rude legend of Border *diablerie*, and sportively asks him to make it the subject of a ballad. He had been already labouring in the elucidation of *The Quaint Inglis*, ascribed to an ancient seer and bard of the same district, and perhaps completed his own sequel, intending the whole to be included in the third volume of *The Minstrelsy*. He assents to Lady Dalkeith's request, and casts about for some new variety of diction and rhyme, which might be adopted without impropriety in a closing strain for the same collection. Sir John Stoddart's casual recitation, a year or two before, of Coleridge's unpublished *Christabel*, had fixed the music of that noble fragment in his memory; and it occurs to him, that by throwing the story of *Gilpin Horner* into somewhat of a similar cadence, he might produce such an echo of the later metrical romance, as would serve to connect his Conclusion of the primitive *Sir Tristrem* with his imitations of the common popular ballad in *The Grey Brother* and *The Eve of St. John*. A single scene of feudal festivity in the hall of Branksome, disturbed by some pranks of a nondescript goblin, was probably all that he contemplated; but his accidental confinement in the midst of a volunteer camp gave him leisure to meditate his theme to the sound of the bugle;—and suddenly there flashes on him the idea of extending his simple outline, so as to embrace

a vivid panorama of that old Border life of war and tumult, and all earnest passions, with which his researches on *The Minstrelsy* had by degrees fed his imagination, until even the minutest feature had been taken home and realised with unconscious intenseness of sympathy; so that he had won for himself in the past, another world, hardly less complete or familiar than the present. Erskine or Cranstoun suggests that he would do well to divide the poem into cantos, and prefix to each of them a motto explanatory of the action, after the fashion of Spenser in *The Faery Queen*. He pauses for a moment—and the happiest conception of the framework of a picturesque narrative that ever occurred to any poet—one that Homer might have envied—the creation of the ancient harper, starts to life. By such steps did *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* grow out of *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*.

While he was “labouring *doucement* at *The Lay*” (as in one of his letters he expresses it), during the recess of 1804, circumstances rendered it next to certain that the small estate of Broadmeadows, situated just over against the ruins of Newark, on the northern bank of the Yarrow, would soon be exposed to sale; and many a time did he ride round it in company with Lord and Lady Dalkeith,

“When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,”

surveying the beautiful little domain with wistful eyes, and anticipating that

“There would he sing achievement high
And circumstance of chivalry,
And Yarrow, as he rolled along,
Bear burden to the Minstrel's song.”

I consider it as, in one point of view, the greatest misfortune of his life that this vision was not realised; but the success of the poem itself changed “the spirit of his dream.” The favour which it at once attained had not been equalled in the case of any one poem of considerable length during at least two generations: it certainly had not been approached in the case of any narrative poem since the days of Dryden. Before it was sent to the press it had received warm commendation from the ablest and most influential critic of the time; but when Mr. Jeffrey's reviewal appeared, a month after publication, laudatory as its language was, it scarcely came up to the opinion which had already taken root in the public mind. It, however, quite satisfied the author; and I think it just to state, that I have not discovered in any of the letters which he received from brother-

poets—no, not even in those of Wordsworth or Campbell—a strain of approbation higher, on the whole, than that of the chief professional reviewer of the period.

“It would be great affectation,” says the Introduction of 1830, “not to own that the author expected some success from *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. The attempt to return to a more simple and natural poetry was likely to be welcomed, at a time when the public had become tired of heroic hexameters, with all the buckram and binding that belong to them in modern days. But whatever might have been his expectations, whether moderate or unreasonable, the result left them far behind; for among those who smiled on the adventurous minstrel were numbered the great names of William Pitt and Charles Fox. Neither was the extent of the sale inferior to the character of the judges who received the poem with approbation. Upwards of 30,000 copies were disposed of by the trade; and the author had to perform a task difficult to human vanity, when called upon to make the necessary deductions from his own merits, in a calm attempt to account for its popularity.”

Through what channel or in what terms Fox made known his opinion of *The Lay*, I have failed to ascertain. Pitt’s praise, as expressed to his niece, Lady Hester Stanhope, within a few weeks after the poem appeared, was repeated by her to William Rose, who, of course, communicated it forthwith to the author; and not long after, the Minister, in conversation with Scott’s early friend William Dundas, signified that it would give him pleasure to find some opportunity of advancing the fortunes of such a writer. “I remember,” writes this gentleman, “at Mr. Pitt’s table in 1805, the Chancellor asked me about you and your then situation, and after I had answered him, Mr. Pitt observed—‘He can’t remain as he is,’ and desired me to ‘look to it.’ He then repeated some lines from *The Lay*, describing the old harper’s embarrassment when asked to play, and said—‘This is a sort of thing which I might have expected in painting, but could never have fancied capable of being given in poetry.’” It is agreeable to know that this great statesman and accomplished scholar awoke at least once from his supposed apathy as to the elegant literature of his own time.

The poet has under-estimated even the patent and tangible evidence of his success. The first edition of *The Lay* was a magnificent quarto, 750 copies; but this was soon exhausted, and there followed one octavo impression after another in close succession to the number of fourteen. In fact, some forty-four

thousand copies had been disposed of in this country, and by the legitimate trade alone, before he superintended the edition of 1830, to which his biographical introductions were prefixed. In the history of British Poetry nothing had ever equalled the demand for *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

The publishers of the first edition were Longman and Co. of London, and Archibald Constable and Co. of Edinburgh; which last house, however, had but a small share in the adventure. The profits were to be divided equally between the author and his publishers; and Scott's moiety was £169 6s. Messrs. Longman, when a second edition was called for, offered £500 for the copyright; this was accepted; but they afterwards, as the Introduction says, "added £100 in their own unsolicited kindness. It was handsomely given, to supply the loss of a fine horse which broke down suddenly while the author was riding with one of the worthy publishers." The author's whole share, then, in the profits of *The Lay*, came to £769 6s.

Mr. Ballantyne, in his *Memorandum*, says, that very shortly after the publication of *The Lay*, he found himself obliged to apply to Mr. Scott for an advance of money; his own capital being inadequate for the business which had been accumulated on his press, in consequence of the reputation it had acquired for beauty and correctness of execution. Already, as we have seen, the printer had received "a liberal loan;"—"and now," says he, "being compelled, *maugre* all delicacy, to renew my application, he candidly answered that he was not quite sure that it would be prudent for him to comply, but in order to evince his entire confidence in me, he was willing to make a suitable advance to be admitted as a third-sharer of my business." No trace has been discovered of any examination into the state of the business, on the part of Scott, at this time. However, he now embarked in Ballantyne's concern almost the whole of the capital which he had a few months before designed to invest in the purchase of Broadmeadows. *Dis aliter visum*.

I have hinted my suspicion that he had formed some distant notion of such an alliance, as early as the date of Ballantyne's projected removal from Kelso; and his Introduction to *The Lay*, in 1830, appears to leave little doubt that the hope of ultimately succeeding at the Bar had waxed very faint, before the third volume of *The Minstrelsy* was brought out in 1803. When that hope ultimately vanished altogether, perhaps he himself would not have found it easy to tell. The most important of men's opinions, views, and projects, are sometimes taken up in so very gradual

a manner, and after so many pauses of hesitation and of inward retraction, that they themselves are at a loss to trace in retrospect all the stages through which their minds have passed. We see plainly that Scott had never been fond of his profession, but that, conscious of his own persevering diligence, he ascribed his scanty success in it mainly to the prejudices of the Scotch solicitors against employing, in weighty causes at least, any barrister supposed to be strongly imbued with the love of literature; instancing the career of his friend Jeffrey as almost the solitary instance within his experience of such prejudices being entirely overcome. Had Scott, to his strong sense and dexterous ingenuity, his well-grounded knowledge of the jurisprudence of his country, and his admirable industry, added a brisk and ready talent for debate and declamation, I can have no doubt that his triumph must have been as complete as Mr. Jeffrey's; nor in truth do I much question that, had one really great and interesting case been submitted to his sole management, the result would have been to place his professional character for skill and judgment, and variety of resource, on so firm a basis, that even his rising celebrity as a man of letters could not have seriously disturbed it. Nay, I think it quite possible, that had he been intrusted with one such case after his reputation was established, and he had been compelled to do his abilities some measure of justice in his own secret estimate, he might have displayed very considerable powers even as a forensic speaker. But no opportunities of this engaging kind having ever been presented to him—after he had persisted for more than ten years in sweeping the floor of the Parliament House, without meeting with any employment but what would have suited the dullest drudge, and seen himself termly and yearly more and more distanced by contemporaries for whose general capacity he could have had little respect—while, at the same time, he already felt his own position in the eyes of society at large to have been signally elevated in consequence of his extra-professional exertions—it is not wonderful that disgust should have gradually gained upon him, and that the sudden blaze and tumult of renown which surrounded the author of *The Lay* should have at last determined him to concentrate all his ambition on the pursuits which had alone brought him distinction.

We have seen that, before he formed his contract with Ballantyne, he was in possession of such a fixed income as might have satisfied all his desires, had he not found his family increasing rapidly about him. Even as that was, with nearly if not

quite £1,000 per annum, he might perhaps have retired not only from the Bar, but from Edinburgh, and settled entirely at Ashestiel or Broadmeadows, without encountering what any man of his station and habits ought to have considered as an imprudent risk. He had, however, no wish to cut himself off from the busy and intelligent society to which he had been hitherto accustomed; and resolved not to leave the Bar until he should have at least used his best efforts for obtaining, in addition to his Shrievalty, one of those Clerkships of the Supreme Court, which are usually considered as honourable retirements for advocates, who, at a certain standing, give up all hopes of reaching the Bench. "I determined," he says, "that literature should be my staff, but not my crutch, and that the profits of my literary labour, however convenient otherwise, should not, if I could help it, become necessary to my ordinary expenses. Upon such a post an author might hope to retreat, without any perceptible alteration of circumstances, whenever the time should arrive that the public grew weary of his endeavours to please, or he himself should tire of the pen. I possessed so many friends capable of assisting me in this object of ambition, that I could hardly overrate my own prospects of obtaining the preferment to which I limited my wishes; and, in fact, I obtained, in no long period, the reversion of a situation which completely met them."*

The first notice of this affair that occurs in his correspondence, is in a note of Lord Dalkeith's, February 2nd, 1805, in which his noble friend says—"My father desires me to tell you that he has had a communication with Lord Melville within these few days, and that he thinks *your business in a good train, though not certain.*" I consider it as clear, then, that he began his negotiations about a seat at the clerk's table immediately after *The Lay* was published: and this in the strictest connexion with his trading adventure. His design of quitting the Bar was divulged, however, to none but those immediately necessary to his negotiation with the Government; and the nature of his alliance with the printing establishment remained, I believe, not only unknown, but for some years wholly unsuspected, by any of his daily companions except Erskine.

The forming of this commercial tie was one of the most important steps in Scott's life. He continued bound by it during twenty years, and its influence on his literary exertions and his worldly fortunes was productive of much good and not a little evil.

* Introduction to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, 1830.

Its effects were in truth so mixed and balanced during the vicissitudes of a long and vigorous career, that I at this moment doubt whether it ought, on the whole, to be considered with more of satisfaction or of regret.

With what zeal he proceeded in advancing the views of the new copartnership, his correspondence bears ample evidence. The brilliant and captivating genius, now acknowledged universally, was soon discovered by the leading booksellers of the time to be united with such abundance of matured information in many departments, and, above all, with such indefatigable habits, as to mark him out for the most valuable workman they could engage for the furtherance of their schemes. He had, long before this, cast a shrewd and penetrating eye over the field of literary enterprise, and developed in his own mind the outlines of many extensive plans, which wanted nothing but the command of a sufficient body of able subalterns to be carried into execution with splendid success. Such of these as he grappled with in his own person were, with rare exceptions, carried to a triumphant conclusion; but the alliance with Ballantyne soon infected him with the proverbial rashness of mere mercantile adventure—while, at the same time, his generous feelings for other men of letters, and his characteristic propensity to overrate their talents, combined to hurry him and his friends into a multitude of arrangements, the results of which were often extremely embarrassing, and ultimately, in the aggregate, all but disastrous. It is an old saying, that wherever there is a secret there must be something wrong; and dearly did he pay the penalty for the mystery in which he had chosen to involve this transaction. It was his rule, from the beginning, that whatever he wrote or edited must be printed at that press; and had he catered for it only as author and sole editor, all had been well; but had the booksellers known his direct pecuniary interest in keeping up and extending the occupation of those types, they would have taken into account his lively imagination and sanguine temperament, as well as his taste and judgment, and considered, far more deliberately than they too often did, his multifarious recommendations of new literary schemes, coupled though these were with some dim understanding that, if the Ballantyne press were employed, his own literary skill would be at his friend's disposal for the general superintendence of the undertaking. On the other hand, Scott's suggestions were in many cases, perhaps in the majority of them, conveyed through Ballantyne, whose habitual deference to his opinion

induced him to advocate them with enthusiastic zeal ; and the printer, who had thus pledged his personal authority for the merits of the proposed scheme, must have felt himself committed to the bookseller, and could hardly refuse with decency to take a certain share of the pecuniary risk, by allowing the time and method of his own payment to be regulated according to the employer's convenience. Hence, by degrees, was woven a web of entanglement from which neither Ballantyne nor his adviser had any means of escape, except only in that indomitable spirit, the mainspring of personal industry altogether unparalleled, to which, thus set in motion, the world owes its most gigantic monument of literary genius.

In the very first letter that I have found from Scott to his *partner* (April 12th, 1805), occur suggestions about new editions of *Thomson*, *Dryden*, and *Tacitus*, and, moreover, of a general edition of the *British Poets*, in one hundred volumes 8vo, of which last he designed to be himself the editor, and expected that the booksellers would readily give him 30 guineas per volume for his trouble. This gigantic scheme interfered with one of the general body of London publishers, and broke down accordingly ; but Constable entered with zeal into the plan of a *Dryden*, and Scott without delay busied himself in the collection of materials for its elucidation.

Precisely at the time when his poetical ambition had been stimulated by the first outburst of universal applause, and when he was forming these engagements with Ballantyne, a fresh impetus was given to the volunteer mania, by the appointment of the Earl of Moira (afterwards Marquis of Hastings) to the chief military command in the north. The Earl had married, the year before, a Scottish Peeress, the Countess of Loudon, and entered with great zeal into her sympathy with the patriotic enthusiasm of her countrymen. Edinburgh was converted into a camp : besides a large garrison of regular troops, nearly 10,000 fencibles and volunteers were almost constantly under arms. The lawyer wore his uniform under his gown ; the shopkeeper measured out his wares in scarlet ; in short, the citizens of all classes made more use for several months of the military than of any other dress ; and the new commander-in-chief consulted equally his own gratification and theirs, by devising a succession of manœuvres which presented a vivid image of the art of war conducted on a large and scientific scale. In the *sham battles* and *sham sieges* of 1805, Craigmillar, Gilmerton, Braidhills, and other formidable positions in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh,

were the scenes of many a dashing assault and resolute defence ; and occasionally the spirits of the mock combatants—English and Scotch, or Lowland and Highland—became so much excited, that there was some difficulty in preventing the rough mockery of warfare from passing into its realities. The Highlanders, in particular, were very hard to be dealt with ; and once, at least, Lord Moira was forced to alter at the eleventh hour his programme of battle, because a battalion of kilted fencibles could not or would not understand that it was their duty to be beat. Such days as these must have been more nobly spirit-stirring than even the best specimens of the fox-chase. To the end of his life, Scott delighted to recall the details of their countermarches, ambuscades, charges, and pursuits, and in all of these his associates of the Light-horse agree that none figured more advantageously than himself. Yet such military interludes seem only to have whetted his appetite for closet work. Indeed, nothing but a complete publication of his letters could give an adequate notion of the facility with which he even at this early period combined the conscientious magistrate, the martinet quartermaster, the speculative printer, and the ardent lover of literature for its own sake.

In the course of the summer and autumn of 1805, we find him in correspondence about another gigantic scheme—an uniform series of the Ancient English Chronicles ; and there are hints of various minor undertakings in the editorial line. In the same year he contributed to Mr. Jeffrey's journal an admirable article on Todd's edition of *Spenser* ; another on Godwin's *Fleetwood* ; a third, on the Highland Society's Report concerning the poems of *Ossian* ; a fourth, on Johnes's *Translation of Froissart* ; a fifth, on Colonel Thornton's *Sporting Tour* ; and a sixth, on some cookery books—the two last being excellent specimens of his humour.

But there is yet another important item to be included in the list of his literary labours of this year. The General Preface to his Novels informs us, that "about 1805" he wrote the opening chapters of *Waverley* ; and the second title, *'Tis Sixty Years Since*, selected, as he says, "that the actual date of publication might correspond with the period in which the scene was laid," leaves no doubt that he had begun the work so early in 1805 as to contemplate publishing it before Christmas.* He adds, in the

* I have ascertained, since this page was written, that a small part of the MS. of *Waverley* is on paper bearing the watermark of 1805—the rest on paper of 1813.

same page, that he was induced, by the favourable reception of *The Lady of the Lake*, to think of giving some of his recollections of Highland scenery and customs in prose ; but this is only one instance of the inaccuracy as to matters of date which pervades all those delightful Prefaces. *The Lady of the Lake* was not published until five years after the first chapters of *Waverley* were written ; its success, therefore, could have had no share in suggesting the original design of a Highland novel, though no doubt it principally influenced him to take up that design after it had been long suspended, and almost forgotten.

Mr. Skene arrived just after a great storm and flood in August. He says in his *Memoranda*—"The ford of Ashestiel was never a good one, and for some time after this it remained not a little perilous. Scott was himself the first to attempt the passage on his favourite black horse Captain, who had scarcely entered the river when he plunged beyond his depth, and had to swim to the other side with his burden. It requires a good horseman to swim a deep and rapid stream, but he trusted to the vigour of his steady trooper, and in spite of his lameness kept his seat manfully."

Mr. Skene soon discovered a change which had recently been made in his friend's distribution of his time. Previously it had been his custom, whenever professional business or social engagements occupied the middle part of his day, to seize some hours for study after he was supposed to have retired to bed. His physician suggested that this was very likely to aggravate his nervous headaches, the only malady he was subject to in the prime of his manhood ; and, contemplating with steady eye a course not only of unremitting but of increasing industry, he resolved to reverse his plan. In short, he had now adopted the habits in which, with slender variation, he ever after persevered when in the country. He rose by five o'clock, lit his own fire when the season required one, and shaved and dressed with great deliberation—for he was a very martinet as to all but the mere coxcombrics of the toilet, not abhorring effeminate dandyism itself so cordially as the slightest approach to personal slovenliness, or even those "bed-gown and slipper tricks," as he called them, in which literary men are so apt to indulge. Clad in his shooting-jacket, or whatever dress he meant to use till dinner-time, he was seated at his desk by six o'clock, all his papers arranged before him in the most accurate order, and his books of reference marshalled around him on the floor, while at least one favourite dog lay watching his eye, just beyond the

line of circumvallation. Thus, by the time the family assembled for breakfast, between nine and ten, he had done enough (in his own language) "*to break the neck of the day's work.*" After breakfast, a couple of hours more were given to his solitary tasks, and by noon he was, as he used to say, "his own man." When the weather was bad, he would labour incessantly all the morning; but the general rule was to be out and on horse-back by one o'clock at the latest; while if any more distant excursion had been proposed over-night, he was ready to start on it by ten; his occasional rainy days of unintermitted study forming, as he said, a fund in his favour, out of which he was entitled to draw for accommodation whenever the sun shone with special brightness.

It was another rule, that every letter he received should be answered that same day. Nothing else could have enabled him to keep abreast with the flood of communications that in the sequel put his good nature to the severest test—but already the demands on him in this way also were numerous; and he included attention to them among the necessary business which must be dispatched before he had a right to close his writing-box, or, as he phrased it, "to say, *out damned spot*, and be a gentleman." In turning over his enormous mass of correspondence, I have almost invariably found some indication that, when a letter had remained more than a day or two unanswered, it was because he found occasion for inquiry.

I ought not to omit, that in those days Scott was far too zealous a dragoon not to take a principal share in the stable duty. Before beginning his desk-work in the morning, he uniformly visited his favourite steed, and neither Captain nor Lieutenant nor Brown Adam (so called after one of the heroes of *The Minstrelsy*) liked to be fed except by him. The latter charger was indeed altogether intractable in other hands, though in his the most submissive of faithful allies. The moment he was bridled and saddled, it was the custom to open the stable door as a signal that his master expected him, when he immediately trotted to the side of the *leaping-on-stone*, of which Scott from his lameness found it convenient to make use, and stood there, silent and motionless as a rock, until he was fairly in his seat, after which he displayed his joy by neighing triumphantly through a brilliant succession of curvettings. Brown Adam never suffered himself to be backed but by his master. He broke, I believe, one groom's arm and another's leg in the rash attempt to tamper with his dignity.

Camp was at this time the constant parlour dog. He was very handsome, very intelligent, and naturally very fierce, but gentle as a lamb among the children. As for a brace of lighter pets, styled Douglas and Percy, he kept one window of his study open, whatever might be the state of the weather, that they might leap out and in as the fancy moved them. He always talked to Camp as if he understood what was said—and the animal certainly did understand not a little of it; in particular, it seemed as if he perfectly comprehended on all occasions that his master considered him as a sensible and steady friend—the greyhounds as volatile young creatures whose freaks must be borne with.

About this time Mr. and Mrs. Scott made a short excursion to the Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, and visited some of their finest scenery, in company with Mr. Wordsworth. I have found no written narrative of this little tour, but I have often heard Scott speak with enthusiastic delight of the reception he met with in the humble cottage which his brother-poet then inhabited on the banks of Grasmere; and at least one of the days they spent together was destined to furnish a theme for the verse of each, namely, that which they gave to the ascent of Helvellyn, where, in the course of the preceding spring, a young gentleman having lost his way and perished by falling over a precipice, his remains were discovered, three months afterwards, still watched by “a faithful terrier-bitch, his constant attendant during frequent rambles among the wilds.”* This day they were accompanied by an illustrious philosopher, who was also a true poet—and might have been one of the greatest of poets had he chosen; and I have heard Mr. Wordsworth say, that it would be difficult to express the feelings with which he, who so often had climbed Hevellyn alone, found himself standing on its summit with two such men as Scott and Davy.

After leaving Mr. Wordsworth, Scott carried his wife to spend a few days at Gilsland, among the scenes where they had first met; and his reception by the company at the wells was such as to make him look back with something of regret, as well as of satisfaction, to the change that had occurred in his circumstances since 1797. They were, however, enjoying themselves much there, when he received intelligence which induced him to believe that a French force was about to land in Scotland:—the alarm indeed had spread far and wide; and

* See *Poetical Works*, edit. 1841, p. 629; and compare Wordsworth, 8vo. edit. vol. iii. p. 96.

a mighty gathering of volunteers, horse and foot, from the Lothians and the Border country, took place in consequence at Dalkeith. He was not slow to obey the summons. He had luckily chosen to accompany on horseback the carriage in which Mrs. Scott travelled. His good steed carried him to the spot of rendezvous, full a hundred miles from Gilsland, within twenty-four hours; and on reaching it, though no doubt to his disappointment the alarm had already blown over, he was delighted with the general enthusiasm that had thus been put to the test—and, above all, by the rapidity with which the yeomen of Ettrick Forest had poured down from their glens, under the guidance of his good friend and neighbour, Mr. Pringle of Torwoodlee. These fine fellows were quartered along with the Edinburgh troop when he reached Dalkeith and Musselburgh: and after some sham battling, and a few evenings of high jollity had crowned the needless muster of the beacon-fires, he immediately turned his horse again towards the south, and rejoined Mrs. Scott at Carlisle.*

By the way, it was during his fiery ride from Gilsland to Dalkeith, on the occasion above mentioned, that he composed his *Bard's Incantation* :—

“The forest of Glenmore is drear,
It is all of black pine and the dark oak-tree,” etc.—

and the verses bear the full stamp of the feelings of the moment.

Meantime, the affair of the Clerkship, opened nine or ten months before, had not been neglected by the friends on whose counsel and assistance Scott had relied. Whether Mr. Pitt's hint to Mr. William Dundas, that he would willingly find an opportunity to promote the interests of the author of *The Lay*, or some conversation between the Duke of Buccleuch and Lord Melville, first encouraged him to this direction of his views, I am not able to state distinctly; but I believe that the desire to see his fortunes placed on some more substantial basis, was at this time partaken pretty equally by the three persons who had the principal influence in the distribution of the Crown patronage in Scotland; and as his object was rather to secure a future than an immediate increase of official income, it was comparatively easy to make such an arrangement as would satisfy his ambition. George Home of Wedderburn, an old friend of his family, had now held a Clerkship for upwards of thirty years. In those days there was no system of retiring

* See Note, “Alarm of Invasion,” *Antiquary*, vol. ii. p. 338.

pensions for the worn-out functionary of this class, and the usual method was, either that he should resign in favour of a successor who advanced a sum of money according to the circumstances of his age and health, or for a coadjutor to be associated with him in his patent, who undertook the duty on condition of a division of salary. Scott offered to relieve Mr. Home of all the labours of his office, and to allow him, nevertheless, to retain its emoluments entire; and the aged clerk of course joined his exertions to procure a conjoint-patent on these very advantageous terms. About the close of 1805, a new patent was drawn out accordingly; but, by a clerical inadvertency, it was drawn out solely in Scott's favour, no mention of Mr. Home being inserted in the instrument. Although, therefore, the sign-manual had been affixed, and there remained nothing but to pay the fees and take out the commission, Scott, on discovering this error, could not proceed in the business; since, in the event of his dying before Mr. Home, that gentleman would have lost the vested interest which he had stipulated to retain. A pending charge of pecuniary corruption had compelled Lord Melville to retire from office some time before Mr. Pitt's death (January 23rd, 1806); and the cloud of popular obloquy under which he now laboured, rendered it impossible that Scott should expect assistance from the quarter to which, under any other circumstances, he would naturally have turned for extrication from this difficulty. He therefore, as soon as the Fox and Grenville cabinet had been nominated, proceeded to London, to make in his own person such representations as might be necessary to secure the issuing of the patent in the right shape.

He had breathed hitherto, as far as political questions of all sorts were concerned, the hot atmosphere of a very narrow scene—and seems (from his letters) to have pictured to himself Whitehall and Downing Street as only a wider stage for the exhibition of the bitter and fanatical prejudices that tormented the petty circles of the Parliament House at Edinburgh; the true bearing and scope of which no man in after-days more thoroughly understood, or more sincerely pitied. The seals of the Home Office had been placed in the hands of a nobleman of the highest character—moreover, an ardent lover of literature;—while the chief of the new Ministry was one of the most generous as well as tasteful of mankind; and there occurred no hesitation whatever on their parts.

His nomination as Clerk of Session appeared in the *Gazette*

(March 8th, 1806) which announced the instalment of the Hon. Henry Erskine and John Clerk of Eldin as Lord Advocate and Solicitor-General for Scotland. The promotion at such a moment, of a distinguished Tory, might well excite the wonder of the Parliament House, and even when the circumstances were explained, the inferior local adherents of the triumphant cause were far from considering the conduct of their superiors in this matter with feelings of satisfaction.

The impeachment of Lord Melville was among the first measures of the new Government ; and personal affection and gratitude graced as well as heightened the zeal with which Scott watched the issue of this, in his eyes, vindictive proceeding ; but, though the ex-Minister's ultimate acquittal was, as to all the charges involving his personal honour, complete, it must now be allowed that the investigation brought out many circumstances by no means creditable to his discretion ; and the rejoicings of his friends ought not, therefore, to have been scornfully jubilant. Such they were, however—at least in Edinburgh ; and Scott took his share in them by inditing a song, which was sung by James Ballantyne, and received with clamorous applauses, at a public dinner given in honour of the event on June 27th, 1806.

But enough of this. Scott's Tory feelings certainly appear to have been kept in a very excited state during the whole of that short reign of the Whigs. He then, for the first time, mingled keenly in the details of county politics,—canvassed electors—harangued meetings ; and, in a word, made himself conspicuous as a leading instrument of his party—more especially as an indefatigable local manager, wherever the parliamentary interest of the Buccleuch family was in peril. But he was, in truth, earnest and serious in his belief that the new rulers of the country were disposed to abolish many of its most valuable institutions ; and he regarded with special jealousy certain schemes of innovation with respect to the courts of law and the administration of justice, which were set on foot by the Crown officers for Scotland. At a debate of the Faculty of Advocates on some of these propositions, he made a speech much longer than any he had ever before delivered in that assembly ; and several who heard it have assured me, that it had a flow and energy of eloquence for which those who knew him best had been quite unprepared. When the meeting broke up, he walked across the Mound, on his way to Castle Street, between Mr. Jeffrey and another of his reforming friends, who complimented him on the rhetorical powers he had been displaying, and would

willingly have treated the subject-matter of the discussion playfully. But his feelings had been moved to an extent far beyond their apprehension : he exclaimed, "No, no—'tis no laughing matter ; little by little, whatever your wishes may be, you will destroy and undermine, until nothing of what makes Scotland Scotland shall remain." And so saying, he turned round to conceal his agitation—but not before Mr. Jeffrey saw tears gushing down his cheek—resting his head until he recovered himself on the wall of the Mound. Seldom, if ever, in his more advanced age, did any feelings obtain such mastery.

Before any of these scenes occurred he had entered upon his duties as Clerk of Session ; and as he continued to discharge them with exemplary regularity, and to the entire satisfaction both of the Judges and the Bar, during the long period of twenty-five years, I think it proper to tell precisely in what they consisted.

The Court of Session sat, in his time, from May 12th to July 12th, and again from November 12th, with a short interval at Christmas, to March 12th. The Judges of the Inner Court took their places on the Bench, every morning, not later than ten o'clock, and remained according to the amount of business ready for dispatch, but seldom for less than four or more than six hours daily ; during which space the Principal Clerks continued seated at a table below the Bench, to watch the progress of the suits, and record the decisions—the cases of all classes being equally apportioned among their number. The Court of Session, however, does not sit on Monday, that day being reserved for the criminal business of the High Court of Justiciary, and there is also another blank day every other week, —the *Teind Wednesday*, as it is called, when the Judges are assembled for the hearing of tithe questions, which belong to a separate jurisdiction, of comparatively modern creation, and having its own separate establishment of officers. On the whole, then, Scott's attendance in Court may be taken to have amounted, on the average, to from four to six hours daily during rather less than six months out of the twelve.

Henceforth, then, when in Edinburgh, his literary work was performed chiefly before breakfast ; with the assistance of such evening hours as he could contrive to rescue from the consideration of Court papers, and from those social engagements in which, year after year, as his celebrity advanced, he was of necessity more and more largely involved ; and of those entire days during which the Court of Session did not sit—days

which, by most of those holding the same official station, were given to relaxation and amusement. So long as he continued quartermaster of the Volunteer Cavalry, of course he had, even while in Edinburgh, some occasional horse exercise ; but, in general, his town life henceforth was in that respect as inactive as his country life ever was the reverse. He scorned for a long while to attach any consequence to this complete alternation of habits ; but we shall find him confessing in the sequel that it proved highly injurious to his bodily health.

CHAPTER V

Marmion—Edition of *Dryden*, etc.—Morritt—Domestic Life—Quarrel with Constable and Co.—John Ballantyne started as a Publisher—*The Quarterly Review* begun. 1806-1809.

DURING the whole of 1806 and 1807 *Dryden* continued to occupy the greater part of Scott's literary hours ; but in the course of the former year he found time, and (notwithstanding a few political bickerings) inclination to draw up three papers for *The Edinburgh Review* ; one being that exquisite piece of humour, the article on *The Miseries of Human Life*, to which Mr. Jeffrey added some, if not all, of *The Reviewers' Groans*. He also edited, with Preface and Notes, *Original Memoirs written during the Great Civil Wars ; being the Life of Sir Henry Slingsby, and Memoirs of Captain Hodgson*, etc. This volume was put forth in October, 1806, by Constable ; and in November he began *Marmion*,—the first of his own Poems in which that enterprising firm had a primary part.

He was at this time in communication with several booksellers, each of whom would willingly have engrossed his labour ; but from the moment that his undertakings began to be serious, he seems to have acted on the maxim, that no author should ever let any one house fancy that they had obtained a right of monopoly over his works—or, as he expressed it, in the language of the Scottish feudalists, "that they had completely thirled him to their mill." Of the conduct of Messrs. Longman, he has attested that it was liberal beyond his expectation ; but, nevertheless, a negotiation which they now opened proved fruitless. Constable offered a thousand guineas for the poem very shortly after it was begun, and without having seen one line of it. It is hinted in the Introduction of 1830, that private circumstances rendered it desirable

for Scott to obtain the immediate command of such a sum ; the price was actually paid long before the book was published ; and it suits very well with Constable's character to suppose that his readiness to advance the money may have outstripped the calculations of more established dealers, and thus cast the balance in his favour. He was not, however, so unwise as to keep the whole adventure to himself. His bargain being concluded, he tendered one-fourth of the copyright to Miller of Albemarle Street, and another to John Murray, then of Fleet Street ; and the latter at once replied, "We both view it as honourable, profitable, and glorious to be concerned in the publication of a new poem by Walter Scott." The news that a thousand guineas had been paid for an unseen and unfinished MS. seemed in those days portentous ; and it must be allowed that the man who received such a sum for a performance in embryo, had made a great step in the hazards as well as in the honours of authorship.

In March, his researches concerning *Dryden* carried him again to the south. For several weeks he gave his day pretty regularly to the pamphlets and MSS. of the British Museum, and the evening to the brilliant societies that now courted him whenever he came within their sphere.

Mr. Guthrie Wright, who was among the familiar associates of the Troop, has furnished me with some details which throw light on the construction of *Marmion*. This gentleman had, through Scott's good offices, succeeded his brother Thomas in the charge of the Abercorn business.—"In the summer of 1807," he says, "I had the pleasure of making a trip with Sir Walter to Dumfries, for the purpose of meeting Lord Abercorn on his way to Ireland. His Lordship did not arrive for two or three days, and we employed the interval in visiting Sweetheart Abbey, Caerlaverock Castle, and some other ancient buildings in the neighbourhood. He recited poetry and old legends from morn till night ; and it is impossible that anything could be more delightful than his society ; but what I particularly allude to is the circumstance, that at that time he was writing *Marmion*, the three or four first cantos of which he had with him, and which he was so good as to read to me. It is unnecessary to say how much I was enchanted with them ; but as he good-naturedly asked me to state any observations that occurred to me, I said in joke that it appeared to me he had brought his hero by a very strange route into Scotland. 'Why,' says I, 'did ever mortal coming from England to Edinburgh

go by Gifford, Crichton Castle, Borthwick Castle, and over the top of Blackford Hill? Not only is it a circuitous *détour*, but there never was a road that way since the world was created! 'That is a most irrelevant objection,' said Sir Walter; 'it was my good pleasure to bring Marmion by that route, for the purpose of describing the places you have mentioned, and the view from Blackford Hill—it was his business to find his road and pick his steps the best way he could. But, pray, how would you have me bring him? Not by the post-road, surely, as if he had been travelling in a mail-coach?'—'No,' I replied; 'there were neither post-roads nor mail-coaches in those days; but I think you might have brought him with a less chance of getting into a swamp, by allowing him to travel the natural route by Dunbar and the sea-coast; and then he might have tarried for a space with the famous Earl of Angus, surnamed Bell-the-Cat, at his favourite residence of Tantallon Castle, by which means you would have had not only that fortress with all his feudal followers, but the Castle of Dunbar, the Bass, and all the beautiful scenery of the Forth to describe.' This observation seemed to strike him much, and after a pause he exclaimed—'By Jove, you are right! I ought to have brought him that way;' and he added, 'but before he and I part, depend upon it he shall visit Tantallon.' He then asked if I had ever been there, and upon saying I had frequently, he desired me to describe it, which I did; and I verily believe it is from what I then said that the accurate description contained in the fifth canto was given—at least I never heard him say he had afterwards gone to visit the castle; and when the poem was published, I remember he laughed, and asked me how I liked Tantallon."

Just a year had elapsed from his beginning the poem, when he penned the Epistle for Canto IV. at Ashestiel; and who, that considers how busily his various pursuits and labours had been crowding the interval, can wonder to be told that

"Even now, it scarcely seems a day
Since first I tuned this idle lay—
A task so often laid aside
When leisure graver cares denied—
That now November's dreary gale,
Whose voice inspired my opening tale,
That same November gale once more
Whirls the dry leaves on Yarrow shore."

The fifth Introduction was written in Edinburgh in the month following; that to the last Canto, during the Christmas festivities

of Mertoun House, where, from the first days of his ballad-rhyming to the close of his life, he, like his bearded ancestor, usually spent that season with the immediate head of the race. The bulky appendix of notes, including a mass of curious antiquarian quotations, must have moved somewhat slowly through the printer's hands ; but *Marmion* was at length ready for publication by the middle of February, 1808.

Among the "graver cares" which he alludes to as having interrupted his progress, were those of preparing himself for an office to which he was formally appointed soon afterwards, namely, that of Secretary to a Parliamentary Commission for the Improvement of Scottish Jurisprudence. This Commission, at the head of which was Sir Islay Campbell, Lord President of the Court of Session, continued in operation for two or three years. Scott's salary, as secretary, was a mere trifle ; but he had been led to expect that his exertions in this capacity would lead to better things.

I shall not say anything more of *Marmion* in this place, than that I have always considered it as on the whole the greatest of Scott's poems. There is a certain light, easy, virgin charm about *The Lay*, which we look for in vain through the subsequent volumes of his verse ; but the superior strength, and breadth, and boldness both of conception and execution in the *Marmion* appear to me indisputable. The great blot, the combination of *mean felony* with so many noble qualities in the character of the hero, was, as the poet says, severely commented on at the time by the most ardent of his early friends, Leyden ; but though he admitted the justice of that criticism, he chose "to let the tree lie as it had fallen." He was also sensible that many of the subordinate and connecting parts of the narrative are flat, harsh, and obscure—but would never make any serious attempt to do away with these imperfections ; and perhaps they, after all, heighten by contrast the effect of the passages of high-wrought enthusiasm which alone he considered, in after-days, with satisfaction. As for the "epistolary dissertations" (as Jeffrey called them), it must, I take it, be allowed that they interfered with the flow of the story, when readers were turning the leaves in the first glow of curiosity ; and they were not, in fact, originally intended to be interwoven in any fashion with the romance of *Marmion*. Though the author himself does not allude to, and had perhaps forgotten the circumstance, when writing the Introductory Essay of 1830—they were announced by an advertisement early in 1807 as *Six Epistles from Ettrick Forest*, to be

published in a separate volume; and perhaps it might have been better that this first plan had been adhered to. But however that may be, are there any pages, among all he ever wrote, that one would be more sorry he should not have written? They are among the most delicious portraiture of genius ever painted of itself,—buoyant, virtuous, happy genius—exulting in its own energies, yet possessed and mastered by a clear, calm, modest mind, and happy only in diffusing happiness around it.

The feelings of political partisanship find no place in this poem; but though Mr. Jeffrey chose to complain of its “manifest neglect of *Scottish* feelings,” I take leave to suspect that the boldness and energy of *British* patriotism which breathes in so many passages, may have had more share than that alleged omission in pointing the pen that criticised *Marmion*. Scott had sternly and indignantly rebuked and denounced the then too prevalent spirit of anti-national despondence; he had put the trumpet to his lips, and done his part at least to sustain the hope and resolution of his countrymen in that struggle from which it was the doctrine of the *Edinburgh Review* that no sane observer of the times could anticipate anything but ruin and degradation. He must ever be considered as the “mighty minstrel” of the Antigallican war; and it was *Marmion* that first announced him in that character.

Be all this as it may, his connexion with the *Review* was now broken off; and indeed it was never renewed, except in one instance, many years after, when the strong wish to serve poor Maturin shook him for a moment from his purpose.

Before quitting *Marmion* and its critics, I ought to say that, like *The Lay*, this and the subsequent great poems were all first published in a splendid quarto form. The 2,000 of the original *Marmion*, price a guinea and a half, were disposed of in less than a month; and twelve octavo editions between 1808 and 1825, had carried the sale to upwards of 30,000 copies, before the author included it in the collection of his poetry with biographical prefaces in 1830; since which period there have been frequent reprints; making an aggregate legitimate circulation between 1808 and 1848 of about 60,000.

Ere the poem was published, a heavy task, begun earlier, and continued throughout its progress, had been nearly completed; and there appeared in the last week of April, 1808, *The Works of John Dryden, now first collected; with notes historical, critical, and explanatory, and a Life of the Author.*—Eighteen volumes 8vo.

This was the bold speculation of William Miller of Albemarle Street ; and the editor's fee, at forty guineas the volume, was £756. The bulk of the collection, the neglect into which a majority of the pieces had fallen, the obsolescence of the party politics which had so largely exercised the author's pen, and the indecorum, not seldom running into flagrant indecency, by which transcendent genius had ministered to the appetites of a licentious age, all combined to make the warmest of Scott's admirers doubt whether even his skill and reputation would be found sufficient to ensure the success of this undertaking. It was, however, better received than any one, except perhaps the courageous bookseller himself, had anticipated. The entire work was reprinted in 1821 ;—since then *The Life of Dryden* has had its place in various editions of Scott's prose miscellanies ; nor perhaps does that class of his writings include any piece which keeps a higher estimation.

I believe that Scott had, in 1807, agreed with London booksellers as to the superintendence of two other large collections, *The Somers Tracts* and *The Sadler State Papers* ; but it seems that Constable first heard of these engagements when he accompanied the second cargo of *Marmion* to the great southern market ; and, alarmed at the prospect of losing his hold on Scott's industry, he at once invited him to follow up his *Dryden* by an edition of *Swift* on the same scale,—offering, moreover, to double the rate of payment ; that is to say, to give him £1,500 for the new undertaking. This munificent tender was accepted ; and as early as May, 1808, I find Scott writing in all directions for books, pamphlets, and MSS., likely to be serviceable in illustrating *The Life and Works of the Dean of St. Patrick's*. While these were accumulating about him, which they soon did in greater abundance than he had anticipated, he concluded his labours on *Sadler*, and kept pace, at the same time, with Ballantyne, as *The Somers Tracts* continued to move through the press. *The Sadler* was published in 1809, in three large volumes, quarto ; but the last of the thirteen equally ponderous tomes to which *Somers* extended, was not dismissed from his desk until towards the conclusion of 1812.

He also edited this year, for Murray, Strutt's unfinished romance of *Queenhoo Hall*, with a conclusion in the fashion of the original ; for Constable, *Carleton's Memoirs of the War of the Spanish Succession*, to which he gave a lively preface and various notes ; and the *Memoirs of Robert Cary, Earl of Monmouth*. The republication of *Carleton*, Johnson's eulogy of

which fills a pleasant page in Boswell, had probably been suggested by the interest which Scott took in the first outbreak of Spanish patriotism consequent on Napoleon's transactions at Bayonne. There is one passage in the preface which I must transcribe. Speaking of the absurd recall of Peterborough from the command in which he had exhibited such a wonderful combination of patience and prudence with military daring, he says: "One ostensible reason was, that Peterborough's parts were of too lively and mercurial a quality, and that his letters shewed more wit than became a General;—a commonplace objection, raised by the dull malignity of commonplace minds, against those whom they see discharging with ease and indifference the tasks which they themselves execute (if at all) with the sweat of their brow and in the heaviness of their hearts. There is a certain hypocrisy in business, whether civil or military, as well as in religion, which they will do well to observe who, not satisfied with discharging their duty, desire also the good repute of men." It was not long before some of the dull malignants of the Parliament House began to insinuate what at length found a dull and dignified mouthpiece in the House of Commons—that if a Clerk of Session had any real business to do, it could not be done well by a man who found time for more literary enterprises than any other author of the age undertook—"wrote more books," Lord Archibald Hamilton serenely added, "than anybody could find leisure to read"—and, moreover, mingled in general society as much as many that had no pursuit but pleasure.

The eager struggling of the different booksellers to engage Scott at this time, is a very amusing feature in the voluminous correspondence before me. Had he possessed treble the energy for which it was possible to give any man credit, he could never have encountered a tithe of the projects that the post brought day after day to him, announced with extravagant enthusiasm, and urged with all the arts of conciliation. I shall mention only one out of at least a dozen gigantic schemes which were thus proposed before he had well settled himself to his *Swift*; and I do so, because something of the kind was a few years later carried into execution. This was a general edition of *British Novelists*,—beginning with De Foe and reaching to the end of the last century—to be set forth with prefaces and notes by Scott, and printed of course by Ballantyne. The projector was Murray, who was now eager to start on all points in the race with Constable: but this was not, as we shall see pre-

sently, the only business that prompted my enterprising friend's first visit to Ashestiel.

There was perhaps nothing (except the one great blunder) that had a worse effect on Scott's pecuniary fortunes, than the readiness with which he exerted his interest with the booksellers on behalf of inferior writers. Even from the commencement of his connexion with Constable in particular, I can trace a continual series of such applications. They stimulated the already too sanguine publisher to numberless risks ; and when these failed, the result was, in one shape or another, some corresponding deduction from the fair profits of his own literary labour. "I like well," Constable was often heard to say in the sequel, "I like well Scott's *ain bairns*—but heaven preserve me from those of his fathering !"

James Hogg was by this time beginning to be appreciated ; and the popularity of his *Mountain Bard* encouraged Scott to more strenuous intercession in his behalf. I have before me a long array of letters on this subject, which passed between Scott and the Earl of Dalkeith and his brother Lord Montagu, in 1808. Hogg's prime ambition at this period was to procure an ensigncy in a militia regiment, and he seems to have set little by Scott's representations that the pay of such a situation was very small, and that, if he obtained it, he would probably find his relations with his brother officers far from agreeable. There was, however, another objection which Scott could not hint to the aspirant himself, but which seems to have been duly considered by those who were anxious to promote his views. Militia officers of that day were by no means unlikely to see their nerves put to the test ; and the Shepherd's—though he wrote some capital war-songs, especially *Donald Macdonald*—were not heroically strung. This was in truth no secret among his early intimates, though he had not measured himself at all exactly on that score, and was even tempted, when he found there was no chance of the militia epaulette, to threaten that he would "list for a soldier" in a marching regiment. Notwithstanding at least one melancholy precedent, the Excise, which would have suited him almost as badly as "hugging Brown Bess," was next thought of ; and the Shepherd himself seems to have entered into that plan with considerable alacrity : but I know not whether he changed his mind, or what other cause prevented such an appointment from taking place. After various shiftings, he at last obtained from the Duke of Buccleuch's kindness the gratuitous life-rent of a small farm in the vale of

Yarrow; and had he contented himself with the careful management of its fields, the rest of his days might have been easy. But he could not withstand the attractions of Edinburgh, which carried him away from Altrive for months every year; and when at home, a warm and hospitable disposition, so often stirred by vanity less pardonable than his, made him convert his cottage into an unpaid hostelry for the reception of endless troops of thoughtless admirers; and thus, in spite of much help and much forbearance, he was never out of one set of pecuniary difficulties before he had begun to weave the meshes of some fresh entanglement. *In pace requiescat.* There will never be such an Ettrick Shepherd again.

In May, 1808, Joanna Baillie spent a week or two under Scott's roof in Edinburgh. Their acquaintance was thus knit into a deep and respectful affection on both sides; and henceforth they maintained a close epistolary correspondence, which will always be read with special interest. But within a few weeks after her departure, he was to commence another intimacy not less sincere and cordial; and one productive of a still more important series of his letters. He had now reached a period of life after which real friendships are but seldom formed; and it is fortunate that another with an Englishman of the highest class of accomplishments had been thoroughly compacted before death cut the ties between him and George Ellis—because his dearest intimates within Scotland had of course but a slender part in his written correspondence. Mr. Morritt of Rokeby and his wife had long been intimate with Lady Louisa Stuart and Mr. William Rose; and the meeting, therefore, had been well prepared for. It took place at Edinburgh in June. Scott shewed them the lions of the town and its vicinity, exactly as if he had nothing else to attend to but their gratification; and Mr. Morritt recollected with particular pleasure one long day spent in rambling along the Esk by Roslin and Hawthornden,

"Where Jonson sat in Drummond's social shade,"

down to the old haunts of Lasswade.

The farmer at whose annual *kirn* Scott and all his household were, in those days, regular guests, was Mr. Laidlaw, the Duke of Buccleuch's tenant on the lands of Peel, which are only separated from the eastern terrace of Ashestiel by the ravine and its brook. Mr. Laidlaw was himself possessed of some landed property in the same neighbourhood, and being considered as wealthy, and fond of his wealth, he was usually called among

the country people *Laird Nippy* ; an expressive designation which it would be difficult to translate. Though a very dry, demure, and taciturn old Presbyterian, he could not resist the Sheriff's jokes ; nay, he even gradually subdued his scruples so far as to become a pretty constant attendant at his "*English printed prayers*" on the Sundays ; which, indeed, the parish-kirk being eight miles distant, attracted by degrees more neighbours than quite suited the capacity of the parlour-chapel. Mr. Laidlaw's wife was a woman of superior mind and manners—a great reader, and one of the few to whom Scott liked lending his books ; for most strict and delicate was he always in the care of them, and indeed, hardly any trivial occurrence ever seemed to touch his temper at all, except anything like irreverent treatment of a book. The intercourse between the family at Ashestiel and this worthy woman and her children, was a constant interchange of respect and kindness ; but I remember to have heard Scott say that the greatest compliment he had ever received in his life was from the rigid old farmer himself ; for, years after he had left Ashestiel, he discovered casually that special care had been taken to keep the turf seat on *the Shirra's knowe* in good repair ; and this was much from Nippy.

Mr. Morritt's mention of the "happy young family clustered round him" at Mr. Laidlaw's *kirn*, reminds me that I ought to say a few words on Scott's method of treating his children in their early days. He had now two boys and two girls ;—and he never had more. He was not one of those who take much delight in a mere infant ; but no father ever devoted more time and tender care to his offspring than he did to each of his, as they reached the age when they could listen to him, and understand his talk. Like their playmates, Camp and the greyhounds, they had at all times free access to his study ; he never considered their prattle as any disturbance ; they went and came as pleased their fancy ; he was always ready to answer their questions ; and when they, unconscious how he was engaged, entreated him to lay down his pen and tell them a story, he would take them on his knee, repeat a ballad or a legion, kiss them, and set them down again to their marbles or ninepins, and resume his labour, as if refreshed by the interruption. From a very early age he made them dine at table, and "to sit up to supper" was the great reward when they had been "very good bairns." In short, he considered it as the highest duty as well as the sweetest pleasure of a parent to be the companion of his children ; he partook of all their little joys and sorrows, and made

his kind informal instructions to blend so easily and playfully with the current of their own sayings and doings, that so far from regarding him with any distant awe, it was never thought that any sport or diversion could go on in the right way, unless *papa* were of the party, or that the rainiest day could be dull, so he were at home.

His letters of this autumn to such friends as Rose, Morritt, and Miss Baillie, give additional details of the pleasant domestic life of Ashestiel. In one (Sept.) he says to Miss Joanna: "If you ask what I am doing, I am very like a certain ancient king, distinguished in *The Edda*, who, when Lok paid him a visit,—

‘Was twisting of collars his dogs to hold,
And combing the mane of his courser bold.’

If this idle man's employment required any apology, we must seek it in the difficulty of seeking food to make savoury messes for our English guests; for we are eight miles from market, and must call in all the country sports to aid the larder." Scott, however, had business enough at this time, besides combing the main of Brown Adam, and twisting couples for Douglas and Percy. He was deep in Swift; and the Ballantyne press was groaning under a multitude of works, with almost all of which his hand as well as his head had something, more or less, to do. But a serious change was about to take place in his relations with the spirited publishing house which had hitherto been the most efficient supporters of that press; and his letters begin to be much occupied with disputes which cost him many anxious hours in the apparently idle autumn of 1808. Mr. Constable had then for his partner Mr. Hunter, afterwards Laird of Blackness, to whose intemperate language, much more than to any part of Constable's own conduct, Scott ascribed this unfortunate alienation; which, however, as well as most of my friend's subsequent misadventures, I am inclined to trace in no small degree to the influence which a third person, hitherto unnamed, was about this time beginning to exercise over the concerns of James Ballantyne.

John Ballantyne, a younger brother of Scott's schoolfellow, was originally destined for the paternal trade of a *merchant*—(that is to say, a dealer in everything from fine broadcloth to children's tops)—at Kelso. The father seems to have sent him when very young to London, where, whatever else he may have done in the way of professional training, he spent some time in the banking-house of Messrs. Currie. On returning to Kelso,

however, the "*department*" which more peculiarly devolved upon him was the tailoring one. His personal habits had not been improved by his brief sojourn in the Great City, and the business, in consequence (by his own statement) of the irregularity of his life, gradually melted to nothing in his hands. Early in 1805, his goods were sold off, and barely sufficed to pay his debts. The worthy old couple found refuge with their ever affectionate eldest son, who provided his father with some little occupation (real or nominal) about the printing office ; and thus John himself again quitted his native place, under circumstances which, as I shall shew in the sequel, had left a deep and painful trace even upon that volatile mind. He had, however, some taste, and he at least fancied himself to have some talent for literature ; and the rise of his brother, who also had met with no success in his original profession, was before him. He had acquired in London great apparent dexterity in book-keeping and accounts. He was married by this time ; and it might naturally be hoped, that with the severe lessons of the past, he would now apply sedulously to any duty that might be entrusted to him. The concern in the Canongate was a growing one, and James Ballantyne's somewhat indolent habits were already severely tried by its management. The Company offered John a salary of £200 a-year as clerk ; and the destitute *ex-merchant* was too happy to accept the proposal.

The great bookseller of Edinburgh was a man of calibre infinitely beyond the Ballantynes. Though with a strong dash of the sanguine (without which, indeed, there can be no great projector in any walk of life), Archibald Constable was one of the most sagacious persons that ever followed his profession. Mr. Thomas Campbell writes to Scott, a year or two before this time : "Our butteracious friend at the Cross turns out a deep draw-well ;" and another eminent literator, still more closely connected with Constable, had already, I believe, christened him "The Crafty." Indeed, his fair and very handsome physiognomy carried a bland astuteness of expression, not to be mistaken by any who could read the plainest of Nature's hand-writing. He made no pretensions to literature—though he was in fact a tolerable judge of it generally, and particularly well skilled in the department of Scotch antiquities. Had he and Scott from the beginning trusted as thoroughly as they understood each other ; had there been no third parties to step in, flattering an everwearing vanity on the one hand into presumption, and on the other side spurring the enterprise that

wanted nothing but a bridle, I have no doubt their joint career might have been one of unbroken prosperity. But the Ballantynes were jealous of the superior mind, bearing, and authority of Constable; and though he too had a liking for them both personally—esteemed James's literary tact, and was far too much of a humourist not to be very fond of the younger brother's company—he could never away with the feeling that they intervened unnecessarily, and left him but the shadow, where he ought to have had the substantial lion's share, of confidence. On his part, again, he was too proud a man to give entire confidence where that was withheld from himself.

But in tracing the progress of the coldness which this year advanced to a complete rupture, it must be especially kept in mind that *The Edinburgh Review* had been the great primary source of the wealth and influence of the house of Constable. The then comparatively little-known bookseller of London, who was destined to be ultimately its most formidable rival in more than one department, has told me, that when he read the article on *Marmion*, and another on general politics in the same number, he said to himself—"Walter Scott has feelings both as a gentleman and a Tory, which these people must now have wounded;—the alliance between him and the whole clique of *The Review*, its proprietor included, is shaken;" and, as far at least as the political part of the affair was concerned, John Murray's sagacity was not at fault. We have seen with what thankful alacrity he accepted a small share in the adventure of *Marmion*—and with what brilliant success that was crowned; nor is it wonderful that a young bookseller, conscious of ample energies, should now have watched with eagerness the circumstances which seemed not unlikely to place within his own reach a more intimate connexion with the first great living author in whose works he had ever had any direct interest. He forthwith took measures for improving and extending his relations with James Ballantyne, through whom, as he guessed, Scott could best be approached. His tenders of employment for the Canon-gate press were such that the apparent head of the firm proposed a conference at Ferrybridge in Yorkshire; and there Murray, after detailing some of his own literary plans—particularly that already alluded to, of a *Novelist's Library*—in his turn sounded Ballantyne so far as to resolve on pursuing his journey into Scotland. Ballantyne had said enough to satisfy him that the project of setting up a new publishing house in Edinburgh, in opposition to Constable, was already all but matured; and

he, on the instant, proposed himself for its active co-operator in the metropolis. The printer proceeded to open his budget farther, mentioning, among other things, that the author of *Marmion* had "both another Scotch poem and a *Scotch novel* on the stocks;" and had moreover chalked out the design of an *Edinburgh Annual Register*, to be conducted in opposition to the politics and criticism of Constable's *Review*. These tidings might have been enough to make Murray proceed farther northwards; but there was a scheme of his own which had for some time deeply occupied his mind, and the last article of this communication determined him to embrace the opportunity of opening it in person at Ashiestiel. He arrived there about the middle of October. The 26th number of *The Edinburgh Review*, containing Mr. Brougham's article entitled "Don Cevallos on the usurpation of Spain," had just been published; and one of the first things Scott mentioned in conversation was, that he had so highly resented the tone of that essay, as to give orders that his name might be discontinued on the list of subscribers.* Mr. Murray could not have wished better auspices for the matter he had come to open; it was no other than the project of a London Review on the scale of *The Edinburgh*; and, for weeks ensuing, Scott's letters to Ellis, Morritt, and other literary Tories, attest with what eager zeal he had embraced the new scheme.

The project of *The Quarterly Review* was not the only declaration of hostilities. The scheme of starting a new book-selling house in Edinburgh, begun in the short-sighted heat of pique, had now been matured;—I cannot add, either with composed observation or rational forecast—for it was ultimately settled that the ostensible and chief managing partner should be a person without capital, and neither by training nor by temper in the smallest degree qualified for such a situation; more especially where the field was to be taken against long experience, consummate skill, and resources which, if not so large as all the world supposed them, were still in comparison vast, and admirably organised. The rash resolution was, however, carried into effect, and a deed deposited for secrecy's sake in the hands of Scott, laid the foundation of the firm of "John

* When the 26th number appeared, Mr. Scott wrote to Constable in these terms: "*The Edinburgh Review* had become such as to render it impossible for me to continue a contributor to it.—Now, it is such as I can no longer continue to receive or read it." The list of the then subscribers exhibits, in an indignant dash of Constable's pen opposite Mr. Scott's name, the word "STOPT !!!"—*R. Cadell.*

Ballantyne and Co., booksellers, Edinburgh." Scott appears to have supplied all the capital, at any rate his own *one-half* share, and *one-fourth*, the portion of James, who, not having any funds to spare, must have become indebted to some one for it. It does not appear from what source John acquired his, the remaining *fourth*; but *Rigdum funnidos* was thus installed in Hanover Street as the avowed rival of "The Crafty."

This was arranged in January. Under the same month I must mention an event often alluded to in its correspondence:—the death of Camp, the first of several dogs whose names will be "freshly remembered" as long as their master's works are popular. This favourite preserved his affection and sagacity to the last. At Ashestiel, as the servant was laying the cloth for dinner, he would say, "Camp, my good fellow, the Sheriff's coming home by the ford—or by the hill;" and the sick animal would immediately bestir himself to welcome his master, going out at the back door or the front door according to the direction given, and advancing as far as he was able, either towards the Tweed, or the Glenkinnon burn. He was buried on a fine moonlight night, in the little garden behind the house in Castle Street, immediately opposite to the window at which Scott usually sat writing. My wife told me that she remembered the whole family standing in tears about the grave, as her father himself smoothed down the turf above Camp with the saddest expression of face she had ever seen in him. He had been engaged to dine abroad that day, but apologised on account of "the death of a dear old friend;" and Mr. Macdonald Buchanan was not at all surprised that he should have done so, when it came out next morning that Camp was no more.

CHAPTER VI

London—Theatrical Anecdotes—Byron's Satire—*The Lady of the Lake*
 —Excursion to the Hebrides—Vision of Don Roderick—Byron
 —Davy—Crabbe—Purchase of Abbotsford. 1809-1812.

IN February Mr. John Ballantyne proceeded to London, for the purpose of introducing himself to the chief publishers there in his new capacity, and especially of taking Mr. Murray's instructions respecting the Scotch management of *The Quarterly Review*. As soon as the spring vacation began Mr. and Mrs. Scott followed him by sea. They stayed two months, and this being the first visit to town since his fame had been crowned

by *Marmion*, he was more than ever the object of curiosity and attention.

Scott had from his boyish days a great love for theatrical representation; and so soon as circumstances enabled him to practise extended hospitality, the chief actors of his time, whenever they happened to be in Scotland, were among the most acceptable of his guests. Mr. Charles Young was, I believe, the first of them of whom he saw much: as early as 1803 I find him writing of that gentleman to the Marchioness of Abercorn as a valuable addition to the society of Edinburgh; and down to the end of Scott's life, Mr. Young was never in the north without visiting him. Another graceful performer, of whom he saw a great deal in his private circle, was Miss Smith, afterwards Mrs. Bartley. But at the period of which I am now treating, his principal theatrical intimacy was with John Philip Kemble, and his sister Mrs. Siddons, both of whom he appears to have often met at Lord Abercorn's villa near Stanmore. Of John Kemble's character and manners, he has recorded his impressions in a pleasing reviewal of Mr. Boaden's *Memoir*. The great tragedian's love of black-letter learning afforded a strong bond of fellowship; and I have heard Scott say that the only man who ever seduced him into very deep potations in his middle life was Kemble. He was frequently at Ashestiel, and a grave butler, by name *John Macbeth*, made sore complaints of the bad hours kept on such occasions in one of the most regular of households; but the watchings of the night were not more grievous to "Cousin Macbeth," as Kemble called the honest *beauiffetier*, than were the hazards and fatigues of the morning to the representative of "the Scotch usurper." Kemble's miseries during a rough gallop were quite as grotesque as those of his namesake, and it must be owned that species of distress was one from the contemplation of which his host could never derive anything but amusement.

I have heard Scott chuckle with particular glee over the recollection of an excursion to the vale of the Ettrick, near which river the party were pursued by a bull. "Come, King John," said he, "we must even take the water;" and accordingly he and his daughter Sophia plunged into the stream. But King John, halting on the bank, and surveying the river, which happened to be full and turbid, exclaimed, in his usual solemn manner,

"The flood is angry, Sheriff;
Methinks I'll get me up into a tree.'

It was well that the dogs had succeeded in diverting the bull, because there was no tree at hand which could have sustained King John, nor, had that been otherwise, could so stately a personage have dismounted and ascended with such alacrity as circumstances would have required. He at length followed his friends through the river with the rueful dignity of Don Quixote.

It was this intercourse which led Scott to exert himself strenuously about 1809, to prevail on Mr. Henry Siddons, the nephew of Kemble, to undertake the lease and management of the Edinburgh Theatre. On this occasion he purchased a share, and became one of the acting trustees; and thenceforth, during a long series of years, he continued to take a very lively concern in the proceedings of the Edinburgh company. In this he was plentifully encouraged by his domestic *camarilla*; for his wife had all a Frenchwoman's passion for the *spectacle*; and the elder Ballantyne was a regular newspaper critic of theatrical affairs, and in that capacity had already attained a measure of authority supremely gratifying to himself.

Scott had by the end of 1809 all but completed his third great poem; yet this year also was crowded with miscellaneous literary labours. In it he made great progress with *Swift*, and in it he finished and saw published his edition of *The Sadler Papers*; the notes copious, curious, lively, and entertaining, and *The Life of Sir Ralph*, a very pleasing specimen of his style. Several volumes of the huge *Somers Collection*, illustrated throughout with similar care, were also issued in 1809; and I suppose he received his fee for each volume as it appeared—the whole sum amounting, when the last came out in 1812, to 1,300 guineas. His labours on these collections were gradually storing his mind with that minute knowledge of the leading persons and events both of Scotch and English history, which made his conversation on such subjects that of one who had rather lived with than read about the departed. He delighted in them, and never complained that they interrupted disadvantageously the works of his higher genius. But he submitted to many less agreeable tasks—among others, at this same period, to a good deal of trouble entailed on him by the will of Miss Seward. Dying in March, 1809, she bequeathed her poetry to Scott, with an injunction to publish it speedily, and prefix a sketch of her life; while she made her letters (of which she had kept copies) the property of Constable. Scott superintended, accordingly, the edition of the lady's verses which was published in three volumes

by John Ballantyne ; and Constable lost no time in announcing her correspondence—an announcement which the poet observed with trepidation ; for few had suffered more than himself from her epistolary restlessness. He says to an authoress of a different breed (Miss Baillie)—“The despair which I used to feel on receiving poor Miss Seward’s letters, whom I really liked, gave me a most unsentimental horror for sentimental letters. I am now doing penance for my ill-breeding, by submitting to edit her posthumous poetry, most of which is absolutely execrable. This, however, is the least of my evils, for when she proposed this bequest to me, which I could not in decency refuse, she combined it with a request that I would publish her whole literary correspondence. This I declined on principle, having a particular aversion at perpetuating that sort of gossip ; but what availed it ? Lo ! to ensure the publication, she left it to an Edinburgh bookseller ; and I anticipate the horror of seeing myself advertised for a live poet like a wild beast on a painted streamer ; for I understand all her friends are depicted therein in body, mind, and manners.” Mr. Constable, however, took this opportunity of re-opening his intercourse with Scott, and gave him essential relief by allowing him to draw his pen through Miss Seward’s extravagant eulogies on himself and his poetry. This attention so gratified him, that he authorised John Ballantyne to ask, in his name, that experienced bookseller’s advice respecting the poem now nearly completed, the amount of the first impression, and other professional details. Mr. Constable readily gave the assistance thus requested, and would willingly have taken any share they pleased in the adventure. They had completed their copyright arrangements before these communications occurred, and the triumphant success of the *coup d’essai* of the new firm was sufficient to close Scott’s ears for a season against any propositions of the like kind from the house at the Cross ; but from this time there was no return of anything like personal ill-will between the parties.

Early in May *The Lady of the Lake* came out—as her two elder sisters had done—in all the majesty of quarto, with every accompanying grace of typography, and with moreover an engraved frontispiece of Saxon’s portrait of Scott ; the price of the book two guineas. For the copyright the poet had nominally received 2,000 guineas, but as John Ballantyne and Co. retained three-fourths of the property to themselves (Miller of London purchasing the other fourth), the author’s profits were, or should have been, more than this.

Mr. Cadell, the publisher of this Memoir, then a young man in training for his profession, retains a strong impression of the interest which the quarto excited before it was on the counter. "James Ballantyne," he says, "read the cantos from time to time to select coteries, as they advanced at press. Common fame was loud in their favour; a great poem was on all hands anticipated. I do not recollect that any of all the author's works was ever looked for with more intense anxiety, or that any one of them excited a more extraordinary sensation when it did appear. The whole country rang with the praises of the poet—crowds set off to view the scenery of Loch Katrine, till then comparatively unknown; and as the book came out just before the season for excursions, every house and inn in that neighbourhood was crammed with a constant succession of visitors. It is a well-ascertained fact, that from the date of the publication of *The Lady of the Lake*, the post-horse duty in Scotland rose in an extraordinary degree, and indeed it continued to do so regularly for a number of years, the author's succeeding works keeping up the enthusiasm for our scenery which he had thus originally created."—Mr. Cadell adds, that four octavo editions followed the quarto within the space of twelve months; that these carried the early sale to 20,000 copies; and that by July, 1836, the legitimate sale in Great Britain had been not less than 50,000 copies; since which date I understand that, in spite of legal and illegal piracies, the fair demand has been well kept up.

In their reception of this work, the critics were for once in full harmony with each other, and with the popular voice. The article in *The Quarterly* was written by George Ellis; but its eulogies, though less discriminative, are not a whit more emphatic than those of Mr. Jeffrey in the rival *Review*. Indeed, I have always considered this last paper as the best specimen of contemporary criticism on Scott's poetry. *The Lay*, if I may venture to state the creed now established, is, I should say, generally considered as the most natural and original, *Marmion* as the most powerful and splendid, *The Lady of the Lake* as the most interesting, romantic, picturesque, and graceful of his great poems.

James Ballantyne has preserved in his *Memorandum* an anecdote strikingly confirmative of the most remarkable statement in this page of Scott's confessions. "I remember," he says, "going into his library shortly after the publication of *The Lady of the Lake*, and finding Miss Scott (who was then a very young

girl) there by herself, I asked her—‘Well, Miss Sophie, how do you like *The Lady of the Lake*?’ Her answer was given with perfect simplicity—‘Oh, I have not read it : papa says there’s nothing so bad for young people as reading bad poetry.’”

Walter Scott was at this epoch in the highest spirits, and having strong reasons of various kinds for his resolution to avail himself of the gale of favour, only hesitated in which quarter to explore the materials of some new romance. His first and most earnest desire was “to take a peep at Lord Wellington and his merry men in the Peninsula,—where,” he says, “I daresay I should have picked up some good materials for battle scenery ;” and he afterwards writes with envy of the way in which a young barrister of his acquaintance (the late excellent John Miller of Lincoln’s Inn, K.C.) spent the long vacation of that year—having the good luck to arrive at Oporto when our army was in retreat from the frontier, and after travelling through a country totally deserted, to hear suddenly, in a low glen, the distant sound of a bagpipe—be welcomed by the officers of a Highland Regiment—and next day witness (rifle in hand) the Battle of Busaco. But Scott dropped his Peninsular plan on perceiving that it gave his wife “more distress than could be compensated by any gratification of his own curiosity.” He then thought of revisiting Rokeby—for, as was mentioned already, he had from the first day that he spent there designed to connect its localities with his verse. But the burst of enthusiasm which followed the appearance of *The Lady of the Lake* finally swayed him to undertake a journey, deeper than he had as yet gone, into the Highlands, and a warm invitation from the Laird of Staffa, easily induced him to add a voyage to the Hebrides. He was accompanied by his wife, his daughter Sophia, Miss Hannah Mackenzie, daughter of “The Man of Feeling,” and a dear friend and distant relation, Mrs. Apreece (now Lady Davy), who had been, as he says in one of his letters, “a lioness of the first magnitude in Edinburgh” during the preceding winter. He travelled slowly with his own horses, through Argyleshire, as far as Oban ; but even where post-horses might have been hired, this was the mode he always preferred in these family excursions, for he delighted in the liberty it afforded him of alighting and lingering as often and as long as he chose ; and, in truth, he often performed the far greater part of the day’s journey on foot—examining the map in the morning so as to make himself master of the bearings—and following his own fancy over some old disused

riding track, or along the margin of a stream, while the carriage, with its female occupants, adhered to the proper road. Of the insular part of the expedition we have many details in the appendages to *The Lord of the Isles*—and others not less interesting to the Notes which he contributed to Croker's edition of *Boswell*. The private letters of 1810 dwell with delight on a scene which it was, indeed, special good fortune for him to witness :—the arrival among the Mackinnons of their young chief (since well known as M.P. for Lymington), whose ancestors had sold or forfeited their insular territory, but could not alienate the affectionate veneration of their clan. He also expatiates with hearty satisfaction on the patriarchal style of the hospitality of Mulva, where the Laird of Staffa (a brother of his colleague Mr. Macdonald Buchanan) lived among “a people distractedly fond of him,” cheered by their adherence to the native soil from which so many of the neighbouring tribes were yearly emigrating, proudly and hopefully encouraging their growth in numbers, and doing whatever he could to keep up the old manners and the old spirit of his region—“his people doubled and his income trebled.” But this is a picture to which we cannot now revert without pain and regret ; for changes in public polity within a few years destroyed utterly the ease and prosperity which the poet witnessed. Like so many others of his class, that gay and high-spirited gentleman was destined to see his fond people pine around him in destitution, until the majority of them also took refuge beyond the Atlantic,—and there was left to himself only the name and shadow of that fair possession, of which, on his death, the last fragment—the rocky Staffa itself—had to be parted with by his children.

On returning from this pleasant expedition, and establishing himself at Ashestiel, Scott, in searching an old desk for fishing-flies one morning, found the forgotten MS. of the first two or three chapters of *Waverley*. From a letter of James Ballantyne's on now reading these chapters, it is plain that he was not their unfavourable critic of 1805 ; but though he argued “success” if the novel were completed, he added that he could not say “how much,” and honestly confessed that the impression made on his mind was far from resembling that he had received from the first specimen of *The Lady of the Lake* : and once more the fated MS. was restored to its hiding-place. But this was not the only unwelcome communication from that quarter. Already their publishing adventure began to wear a bad aspect. Between

1805 and the Christmas of 1809, Scott invested in the Ballantyne firms not less than £9,000; by this time probably there had been a farther demand on his purse; and now the printer's triumph in the fast-multiplying editions of *The Lady of the Lake* was darkened with ominous reports about their miscellaneous speculations—such as *The Beaumont and Fletcher of Weber*—the *Tixall Poetry*,—and *The History of the Culdees* by Dr. Jamieson. But a still more serious business was *The Edinburgh Annual Register*. Its two first volumes were issued about this time, and expectation had been highly excited by the announcement that the historical department was in the hands of Southey, while Scott and other eminent persons were to contribute to its miscellaneous literature and science. Mr. Southey was fortunate in beginning his narrative with the great era of the Spanish Revolt against Napoleon, and it exhibited his usual research, reflection, elegance, and spirit. The second volume contained some of his most admired minor poems; and Scott enriched it both with verse and prose. Nevertheless, the public were alarmed by the extent of the history, and the prospect of two volumes annually. This was, in short, a new periodical publication on a large scale; all such adventures are hazardous; none of them can succeed, unless there be a skilful bookseller, and a zealous editor, who give a large share of their industry and intelligence, day after day, to its arrangements. Such a bookseller John Ballantyne was not; such an editor, with Scott's multifarious engagements, he could not be. The volumes succeeded each other at irregular intervals; there was soon felt the want of one ever-active presiding spirit; and though the work was continued during a long series of years, it never profited the projectors.

Meantime, unflagging was the interest with which, among whatever labours and anxieties, he watched the progress of the great contest in the Peninsula. It was so earnest, that he never on any journey, not even in his very frequent passages between Edinburgh and Ashestiel, omitted to take with him the largest and best map he had been able to procure of the seat of war; upon this he was perpetually poring, tracing the marches and countermarches of the French and English by means of black and white pins; and not seldom did Mrs. Scott complain of this constant occupation of his attention and her carriage. In the beginning of 1811, a committee was formed in London to collect subscriptions for the relief of the Portuguese, who had seen their lands wasted and their houses burnt

in the course of Massena's last campaign; and Scott, on reading the advertisement, addressed the chairman, begging to contribute the profits, to whatever they might amount, of the first edition of a poem connected with the localities of the patriotic struggle. His offer was accepted. *The Vision of Don Roderick* was published, in quarto, in July; and the money forwarded to the board. Lord Dalkeith writes thus: "Those with ample fortunes and thicker heads may easily give 100 guineas to a subscription, but the man is really to be envied who can draw that sum from his own brains, and apply the produce to so exalted a purpose."

Throughout 1811, his serious labour continued to be bestowed on the *Swift*; but this and all other literary tasks were frequently interrupted in consequence of a step which he took early in the year. He had now at last the near prospect of emolument from his Edinburgh post. For, connected with the other reforms in the Scotch judicature, was a plan for allowing the retirement of functionaries, who had served to an advanced period of life, upon pensions—while the effective Clerks of Sessions were to be paid not by fees, but by fixed salaries of £1,300; and contemplating a speedy accession of income so considerable as this, he resolved to place himself in the situation to which he had probably from his earliest days looked forward as the highest object of ambition, that of a Tweedside Laird.—*Sit mihi sedes utinam senectæ!*

And the place on which he had fixed his views, though not to the common eye very attractive, had long been one of peculiar interest for him. I have often heard him tell, that when travelling in boyhood with his father from Selkirk to Melrose, the old man desired the carriage to halt at the foot of an eminence, and said, "We must get out here, Walter, and see a thing quite in your line." His father then conducted him to a rude stone on the edge of an acclivity about half a mile above the Tweed, which marks the spot—

"Where gallant Cessford's life-blood dear
Reeked on dark Elliot's border spear."

This was the conclusion of the battle of Melrose, fought in 1526, between the Earls of Angus and Home and the two chiefs of the race of Kerr on the one side, and Buccleuch on the other, in sight of the young King James V., the possession of whose person was the object of the contest. This battle is often mentioned in *The Border Minstrelsy*, and the reader will find

a long note on it, under the lines which I have just quoted from *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. In the names of *Skirmish-field*, *Charge-Law*, and so forth, various incidents of the fight have found a lasting record ; the spot where the retainer of Buccleuch terminated the pursuit by the mortal wound of Kerr of Cessford (ancestor of the Dukes of Roxburghe), has always been called *Turn-again*. In his own future domain the young minstrel had before him the scene of the last great Clan-battle of the Borders.

On May 12th, 1811, he writes thus to James Ballantyne : " My lease of Ashestiel is out. I have, therefore, resolved to purchase a piece of ground sufficient for a cottage and a few fields. There are two pieces, either of which would suit me, but both would make a very desirable property indeed. They stretch along the Tweed, on the opposite side of Lord Somerville, and could be had for between £7,000 and £8,000—or either separate for about half the sum. I have serious thoughts of one or both, and must have recourse to my pen to make the matter easy. The worst is the difficulty which John might find in advancing so large a sum as the copyright of a new poem ; supposing it to be made payable within a year at farthest from the work going to press,—which would be essential to my purpose. Yet *The Lady of the Lake* came soon home. I have a letter this morning giving me good hope of my Treasury business being carried through : if this takes place, I will buy both the little farms, which will give me a mile of the beautiful turn of the Tweed above Gala-foot—if not, I will confine myself to one. It is proper John and you should be as soon as possible apprised of these my intentions, which I believe you will think reasonable in my situation, and at my age, while I may yet hope to sit under the shade of a tree of my own planting. I hope this *Register* will give its start to its predecessors ; I assure you I shall spare no pains. John must lend his earnest attention to clear his hands of the quire stock, and to taking it as little as he can unless in the way of exchange ; in short, reefing our sails, which are at present too much spread for our ballast."

It would no doubt have been wise not to buy land at all until he had seen the Treasury arrangement as to his clerkship completed—until he had completed also the poem on which he relied mainly for the purchase-money ; above all, until " John reefed his sails ;" but he contented himself with one of the farms, that comprising the scene of Cessford's slaughter ; the cost being £4,000—one-half of which was borrowed of his brother, Major John Scott, the other, raised by the Ballantynes,

on the security of the long-meditated *Rokeby*. The seller, the Rev. Dr. Douglas, holding the living of Galashiels, in the same neighbourhood, had never resided on the property, and his efforts to embellish it had been limited to one stripe of firs, so long and so narrow that Scott likened it to a black hair-comb. It ran from the precincts of the homestead to near *Turn-again*, and has bequeathed the name of *the Doctor's redding-kame* to the mass of nobler trees amidst which its dark straight line can now hardly be traced. The farm consisted of a meadow or *haugh* along the banks of the river, and a tract of undulated ground behind, all in a neglected state, undrained, wretchedly enclosed, much of it covered with the native heath. The house was small and poor, with a common *kail-yard* on one flank, and a staring barn on the other ; while in front appeared a filthy pond covered with ducks and duckweed, from which the whole tenement had derived the unharmonious designation of *Clarty Hole*. But the Tweed was everything to him—a beautiful river, flowing broad and bright over a bed of milk-white pebbles, unless here and there where it darkened into a deep pool, overhung as yet only by the birches and alders which had survived the statelier growth of the primitive forest ; and the first hour that he took possession, he claimed for his farm the name of the adjoining *ford*, situated just above the influx of the classical tributary Gala. As might be guessed from the name of *Abbotsford*, these lands had all belonged of old to the great Abbey of Melrose ; and indeed the Duke of Buccleuch, as the territorial representative of that religious brotherhood, still retains some seignorial rights over them and almost all the surrounding district. Another feature of no small interest in Scott's eyes was an ancient Roman road leading from the Eildon hills to this ford, the remains of which, however, are now mostly sheltered from view amidst his numerous plantations. The most graceful and picturesque of all the monastic ruins in Scotland, the Abbey of Melrose itself, is visible from many points in the immediate neighbourhood of the house ; and last, not least, on the rising ground full in view across the river, the traveller may still observe the chief traces of that celebrated British barrier, the *Catrail*. Such was the territory on which his prophetic eye already beheld rich pastures, embosomed among flourishing groves, where his children's children should thank the founder. To his brother-in-law Mr. Carpenter he writes : “I have bought a property extending along the banks of the River Tweed for about half a mile. This is the greatest incident which has lately taken place

in our domestic concerns, and I assure you we are not a little proud of being greeted as *laird* and *lady* of *Abbotsford*. We will give a grand gala when we take possession of it, and as we are very *clannish* in this corner, all the Scots in the country, from the Duke to the peasant, shall dance on the green to the bagpipes, and drink whisky punch."

In Janaury, 1812, Scott entered upon the enjoyment of his proper salary as a Clerk of Session, which, with his sherifffdom, gave him from this time till very near the close of his life, a professional income of £1,600 a-year.

He had finally left Ashestiel at Whitsuntide; and the day when this occurred was a sad one for many a poor neighbour—for they lost, both in him and his wife, very generous protectors. In such a place, among the few evils which counterbalance so many good things in the condition of the peasantry, the most afflicting is the want of access to medical advice. As far as their means and skill would go, they had both done their utmost to supply this want; and Mrs. Scott, in particular, had made it her business to visit the sick in their scattered cottages, and bestowed on them the contents of her medicine-chest as well as of the larder and cellar, with the same unwearied kindness that I observed in her afterwards as lady of *Abbotsford*. Their children remembered the parting scene as one of unmixed affliction—but it had had its lighter features. Among the English friends whom Scott owed to his frequent visits at Rokeby, none had a higher place in his regard than Lady Alvanley, the widow of the celebrated Chief-Justice of the Common Pleas. To her, on the 25th he says: "The neighbours have been much delighted with the procession of my furniture, in which old swords, bows, targets, and lances made a very conspicuous show. A family of turkeys was accommodated within the helmet of some *preux* chevalier of ancient Border fame; and the very cows, for aught I know, were bearing banners and muskets. I assure your ladyship that this caravan, attended by a dozen of ragged rosy peasant children, carrying fishing-rods and spears, and leading poneys, greyhounds, and spaniels, would, as it crossed the Tweed, have furnished no bad subject for the pencil, and really reminded me of one of the gypsey groupes of Callot upon their march."

The necessary alterations on the old farm-house immediately commenced; and besides raising its roof and projecting some of the lower windows, a rustic porch, a supplemental cottage at one end, and a fountain to the south, soon made their appearance.

CHAPTER VII

Publication of *Rokeby* and *The Bridal of Triermain*—Commercial Difficulties—Reconciliation with Constable—Death of Weber—Voyage to the Shetland, Orkney, and Hebridean Islands—Publication of the *Life and Works of Swift*—and of *Waverley*. 1812-1814.

THIS was one of the busiest summers of his busy life. Till July 12th he was at his post in the Court of Session five days every week ; but every Saturday evening found him at Abbotsford, to observe the progress his labourers had made within doors and without in his absence ; and on Monday night he returned to Edinburgh. Even before the Summer Session commenced, he appears to have made some advance in his *Rokeby*, for he writes to Mr. Morritt, from Abbotsford, on May 4th : "As for the house and the poem, there are twelve masons hammering at the one, and one poor noddle at the other—so they are both in progress ;" and his literary tasks throughout the long vacation were continued under the same sort of disadvantage. That autumn he had, in fact, no room at all for himself. The only parlour which had been hammered into habitable condition, served at once for dining-room, drawing-room, schoolroom, and study. A window looking to the river was kept sacred to his desk ; an old bed-curtain was nailed up across the room close behind his chair, and there, whenever the spade, the dibble, or the chisel (for he took his full share in all the work on hand) was laid aside, he plied his pen, apparently undisturbed and unannoyed by the surrounding confusion of masons and carpenters, to say nothing of the lady's small talk, the children's babble among themselves, or their repetition of their lessons. The truth no doubt was, that when at his desk he did little more, as far as regarded *poetry*, than write down the lines which he had fashioned in his mind while pursuing his vocation as a planter. By-and-by, he says to Terry : "The acorns are coming up fast, and Tom Purdie is the happiest and most consequential person in the world. My present work is building up the well with some *débris* from the Abbey. The worst of all is, that while my trees grow and my fountain fills, my purse, in an inverse ratio, sinks to zero."

For many years Scott had accustomed himself to proceed in the composition of poetry along with that of prose essays of

various descriptions : but it is a remarkable fact that he chose this period of perpetual noise and bustle, when he had not even a summer-house to himself, for the new experiment of carrying on two poems at the same time—and this too without suspending the heavy labour of his *Swift*, to say nothing of lesser matters in which the Ballantynes were, from day to day, calling for the assistance of his judgment and his pen. In the same letter in which Erskine acknowledges the receipt of the first four pages of *Rokeby*, he adverts also to *The Bridal of Triermain* as in rapid progress.

The same post which conveyed Erskine's letter above quoted, brought him an equally wise and kind one in answer to a fresh application for details about the Valley of the Tees. Scott had promised to spend part of this autumn with Morritt ; but now, busied with his planting, and continually urged by Ballantyne to have the quarto ready by Christmas, he would willingly have trusted his friend's knowledge in place of his own research. Morritt urgently represented, in reply, the expediency of a leisurely personal inspection ; adding, "I shall always feel your friendship as an honour ; we all wish our honours to be permanent : and yours promises mine at least a fair chance of immortality. I hope, however, you will not be obliged to write in a hurry. If you want a few hundred independent of these booksellers, your credit is so very good, now that you have got rid of your Old Man of the Sea, that it is no great merit to trust you, and I happen at this moment to have five or six for which I have no sort of demand :—so rather than be obliged to spur Pegasus beyond the power of pulling him up when he is going too fast, do consult your own judgment, and set the midwives of the trade at defiance." This appeal was not to be resisted. Scott accepted Morritt's friendly offer so far as to ask his assistance in having some of his printer's bills discounted ; and he proceeded the week after to *Rokeby*, travelling on horseback, his eldest boy and girl on their ponies, while Mrs. Scott followed in the carriage. Halting at Flodden to expound the field to his young folks, he found that *Marmion* had benefited the public-house there very largely ; and the village Boniface, overflowing with gratitude, expressed his anxiety to have a *Scott's Head* for his sign-post. The poet demurred to this proposal, and assured mine host that nothing could be more appropriate than the portraiture of a foaming tankard, which already surmounted his doorway. "Why, the painter-man has not made an ill job," said the landlord, "but

I would fain have something more connected with the book that has brought me so much custom." He produced a well-thumbed copy, and handing it to the author, begged he would at least suggest a motto from the tale of Flodden Field. Scott opened the book at the death-scene of the hero, and his eye was immediately caught by the "Inscription" in black letter—

"Drink, weary pilgrim, drink, and pray
For the kind soul of Sibyl Grey."

"Well, my friend," said he, "what more would you have? You need but strike out one letter in the first of these lines, and make your painter-man, the next time he comes this way, print between the jolly tankard and your own name

'Drink, weary pilgrim, drink and PAY.'"

Scott was delighted to find, on his return, that this suggestion had been adopted, and for aught I know, the romantic legend may still be visible.

Crowded as this year was with multifarious cares and tasks—the romance of *Rokeby* was finished before the close of 1812. Though it had been long in hand, the MS. bears abundant evidence of its being the *prima cura*: three cantos at least reached the printer through the Melrose post—written on paper of various sorts and sizes—full of blots and interlineations—the closing couplets of a despatch now and then encircling the page, and mutilated by the breaking of the seal.

On the day of publication (January 12th, 1813), Scott writes gaily enough to Morritt, from his seat at the Clerks' table: "The book has gone off here very bobbishly; for the impression of 3,000 and upwards is within two or three score of being exhausted, and the demand for these continuing faster than they can be boarded. I am heartily glad of this, for now I have nothing to fear but a bankruptcy in the *Gazette* of Parnassus; but the loss of five or six thousand pounds to my good friends and school companions would have afflicted me very much. I wish we could whistle you here to-day. Ballantyne always gives a christening dinner, at which the Duke of Buccleuch and a great many of my friends are formally feasted. He has always the best singing that can be heard in Edinburgh, and we have usually a very pleasant party, at which your health as patron and proprietor of *Rokeby* will be faithfully and honourably rewarded."

It will surprise no one to hear that Mr. Morritt assured his

friend he considered *Rokeby* as the best of all his poems. The admirable, perhaps the unique fidelity of the local descriptions, might alone have swayed, for I will not say it perverted, the judgment of the lord of that beautiful and thenceforth classical domain; and, indeed, I must admit that I never understood or appreciated half the charm of this poem until I had become familiar with its scenery. But Scott himself had not designed to rest his strength on these descriptions. He said to his printer while the work was in progress (September), "I hope the thing will do, chiefly because the world will not expect from *me* a poem of which the interest turns upon *character*;" and in another letter (October), "I think you will see the same sort of difference taken in all my former poems,—of which I would say, if it is fair for me to say anything, that the force in *The Lay* is thrown on style—in *Marmion*, on description—and in *The Lady of the Lake*, on incident." Possibly some of these distinctions may have been matters of afterthought; but as to *Rokeby* there can be no mistake. Of its principal characters no one who compares the poem with his novels will doubt that, had he undertaken their portraiture in prose, they would have come forth with effect hardly inferior to any of all the groups he ever created. As it is, I question whether even in his prose there is anything more exquisitely wrought out, as well as fancied, than the whole contrast of the two rivals for the love of the heroine; and that heroine herself has a very particular interest attached to her. Writing to Miss Edgeworth five years after this time (1818), he says: "I have not read one of my poems since they were printed, excepting last year *The Lady of the Lake*, which I liked better than I expected, but not well enough to induce me to go through the rest—so I may truly say with Macbeth:—

"I am afraid to think of what I've done—
Look on't again I dare not."

This much of Matilda I recollect—for that is not so easily forgotten—that she was attempted for the existing person of a lady who is now no more, so that I am particularly flattered with your distinguishing it from the others, which are in general mere shadows." I can have no doubt that the lady he here alludes to, was the object of his own unfortunate first love; and as little, that in the romantic generosity, both of the youthful poet who fails to win her higher favour, and of his chivalrous competitor, we have before us something more than a mere shadow.

I have already adverted to the fact that Scott felt it a relief, not a fatigue, to compose the *Bridal of Triermain* *pari passu* with *Rokeby*. In answer, for example, to one of his printer's letters, he says : "I fully share in your anxiety to get forward the grand work ; but, I assure you, I feel the more confidence from coquetting with the guerilla." The quarto was followed, within two months, by the small volume which had been designed for a twin-birth ;—the MS. had been transcribed by one of the Ballantynes themselves, in order to guard against any indiscretion of the press-people ; and the mystification, aided and abetted by Erskine, in no small degree heightened the interest of its reception. Except Morritt, Scott had no English confidant. Whether any of his companions in the Parliament House were in the secret, I have never heard ; but I can scarcely believe that any of those who had known him and Erskine, from their youth upwards, could have believed the latter capable either of the invention or the execution of this airy and fascinating romance in little. Mr. Jeffrey, as it happened, made a voyage that year to America, and thus lost the opportunity of immediately expressing his opinion either of *Rokeby* or of *Triermain*.

Before *Triermain* came out, Scott had taken wing for Abbotsford ; and indeed he seems to have so contrived it in his earlier period, that he should not be in Edinburgh when any unavowed work was published ; whereas, from the first, in the case of books that bore his name on the title-page, he walked as usual to the Parliament House, and bore all the buzz and tattle of friends and acquaintance with an air of good-humoured equanimity, or rather of total indifference.

The limits of this narrative do not admit of minute details concerning the commercial adventures in which Scott was entangled ; and those of the period we have now reached are so painful that I am very willing to spare them. By the spring of 1813 the crisis in the war affected credit universally ; and while the oldest firms in every department of the trade of literature had difficulties to contend with, the pressure brought many of humbler resources to extremity. It was so with the house of John Ballantyne & Co. ; which had started with no solid capital except what Scott supplied ; and had been entrusted to one who never looked beyond the passing day—availed himself with a blind recklessness of the system of discounting and renewing bills—and, though attached to Scott by the strongest ties of grateful veneration, yet allowed himself to

neglect month after month the most important of his duties—that of keeping the only moneyed partner accurately informed as to the actual obligations and resources of the establishment.

Mr. John's loose methods of transacting business had soon cooled the alliance between his firm and the great Tory publisher of London. Murray's Scotch agency was taken away—he retained hardly any connection with Scott himself, except as a contributor to his *Review*, and from time to time a friendly visitor in Albemarle Street; and under these altered circumstances, I do not see how the whole concern of John Ballantyne & Co. could have escaped the necessity of an abrupt and disastrous exposure within but a few weeks after the appearance of the *Triermain*, had not the personal differences with Constable been by that time healed. Mr. Hunter had now retired from that house; and Constable, released from his influence, had been watching with hope the unconcealable complication in the affairs of this fragile rival. Constable had never faltered in his conviction that Scott must continue to be the ruling spirit in the literature of their age: and there were few sacrifices which that sanguine man would not have made to regain his hold on the unmatched author. The Ballantynes saw the opening for help, and their advances were well met; but some quite unexpected calls on Scott compelled him to interfere directly, and he began in his own person a negotiation which, though at the time he likened it to that of the Treaty of Amiens, was far from being capriciously protracted, or from leading only to a brief and barren truce. Constable, flattered *in limine* by the offer, on fair terms, of a fourth part of the remaining copy-right of *Rokeby*, agreed to relieve the labouring firm of a mass of its stock: the partners to exert themselves in getting rid of the residue, and then wind up their publishing concern with all convenient speed. This was a great relief; on May 18th, 1813, Scott writes to Mr. John: "For the first time these many weeks, I shall lay my head on a quiet pillow;" but there was still much to be achieved. The warehouse must still groan under unsaleable quires—the desk, too late explored, shewed a dismal vista of approaching demand. Scott was too just not to take something of the blame upon himself: the accumulated stock bore witness against too many of his own plans and suggestions: nor could he acquit himself of carelessness in not having forced the manager to greater exactness in the detailing of accounts. But still he felt that he had serious reason for complaint; and the letter of which a sentence has just been

quoted ends in these words, which ought to have produced the deeper impression because of their gentleness : " Adieu, my dear John. If I have ever expressed myself with irritation in speaking of this business, you must impute it to *the sudden extensive and unexpected embarrassments in which I found myself involved all at once*. If to your real goodness of heart and integrity, and to the quickness and acuteness of your talents, you added habits of more universal circumspection, and, above all, the courage to tell disagreeable truths to those whom you hold in regard, I pronounce that the world never held such a man of business. These it must be your study to add to your other good qualities. Meantime, as some one says to Swift, I love you with all your failings. Pray make an effort and love me with all mine. Yours truly, W. S.

" P.S.—James has behaved very well during this whole transaction, and has been most steadily attentive to business. I am convinced that the more he works the better his health will be. *One or other of you will need to be constantly in the printing-office henceforward*—it is the sheet-anchor."

The allusion in this postscript to the printer's health reminds me that Scott's letters to himself are full of hints on that subject, even from a very early period of their connexion ; and these hints are all to the same effect. One letter (Ashestiel, 1810) will be a sufficient specimen : " I am very sorry for the state of your health, and should be still more so, were I not certain that I can prescribe for you as well as any physician in Edinburgh. You have naturally an athletic constitution and a hearty stomach, and these agree very ill with a sedentary life and the habits of indolence which it brings on. You must positively put yourself on a regimen as to eating, not for a month or two, but for a year at least, and take regular exercise—and my life for yours." Among the early pets at Abbotsford there was a huge raven, whose powers of speech were remarkable, and who died in consequence of an equally remarkable voracity. Thenceforth, Scott often repeated to his old friend, and occasionally scribbled by way of postscript to his notes on business—

" When you are craving,
Remember the Raven."

Sometimes the formula is varied to—

" When you've dined half,
Think on poor Ralph !"

His preachments of regularity in book-keeping to John, and of abstinence from good cheer to James, were equally vain; but, on the other hand, it must be allowed that the "hard skirmishes," as he calls them, of May, 1813, do not seem to have left on himself all the impression that might have been anticipated. He was in the most vigorous of his prime: his temperament was buoyant and hopeful: nothing had occurred to check his confidence in the resources of his own genius and industry. So it was, that ere many weeks had passed, he was preparing fresh embarrassments for himself by bidding for another parcel of land. As early as June 20th he writes to Constable as being already aware of this matter, and alleges his anxiety "to close at once with a very capricious person," as the only reason that could have induced him to offer for £5,000 the whole copyright of an as yet unwritten poem, to be called *The Nameless Glen*. A long correspondence ensued, in the course of which Scott mentions *The Lord of the Isles*, as a title which had suggested itself to him in place of *The Nameless Glen*; but as the negotiation did not succeed, I may pass its details. The new property which he was so eager to acquire, was that hilly tract stretching from the old Roman road near Turnagain towards the Cauldshiels Loch: a then desolate and naked mountain-mere, which he likens, in a letter of this summer, to the Lake of the Genie and the Fisherman in the Arabian Tale. To obtain this lake at one extremity of his estate, as a contrast to the Tweed at the other, was a prospect for which hardly any sacrifice would have appeared too much; and he contrived to gratify his wishes in the course of July. Nor was he, I must add, more able to control some of his minor tastes. I find him writing to Terry on the same June 20th, about "that splendid lot of ancient armour, advertised by Winstanley," a celebrated auctioneer in London, of which he had the strongest fancy to make spoil, though he was at a loss to know where it should be placed when it reached Abbotsford; and on July 2nd, this acquisition having been settled, he says to the same correspondent: "I have written to Mr. Winstanley. My bargain with Constable was otherwise arranged, but little John is to find the needful article, and I shall take care of Mr. Winstanley's interest, who has behaved too handsomely in this matter to be trusted to the mercy of our little friend the Picaroon, who is, notwithstanding his many excellent qualities, a little on the score of old Gobbo—doth somewhat smack—somewhat grow to."

On July 12th, as usual, he removed to Tweedside ; but he had not long enjoyed himself in sketching out woods and walks for the borders of his Fairy Lake before he received sharp admonishment. Two lines of a letter to the "little Picaroon," dated July 24th, speak already to a series of annoyances : "Dear John,—I sent you the order, and have only to hope it arrived safe and in good time. I waked the boy at three o'clock myself, having slept little, less on account of the money than of the time. Surely you should have written, three or four days before, the probable amount of the deficit, and, as on former occasions, I would have furnished you with means of meeting it. These expresses, besides every other inconvenience, excite surprise in my family and in the neighbourhood. I know no justifiable occasion for them but the unexpected return of a bill. I do not consider you as answerable for the success of plans, but I do and must hold you responsible for giving me, in distinct and plain terms, your opinion as to any difficulties which may occur, and that in such time that I may make arrangements to obviate them if possible."

The affair of the 24th itself was aggravated by the circumstance that Scott had been prepared to start on the 25th for a visit in a different county : so that the worst consequences that had so late alarmed his *manager*, must have been after all unavoidable if he had deferred his messenger but a few hours more.

Scott proceeded, accordingly, to join a gay and festive circle, whom the Duke of Buccleuch had assembled about him on first taking possession of the magnificent Castle of Drumlanrig, in Nithsdale, the principal messuage of the dukedom of Queensberry, which had recently lapsed into his family. But *post equitem sedet atra cura*—a second and a third of these unwelcome missives, rendered necessary by neglect of precisely the same kind, reached him in the midst of this scene of rejoicing.

He had been engaged also to meet the Marquis of Abercorn at Carlisle, in the first week of August, on business connected with his brother Thomas's late administration of that nobleman's affairs ; and he had designed to pass from Drumlanrig to Carlisle for his purpose, without going back to Abbotsford. In consequence of these repeated harassments, however, he so far altered his plans as to cut short his stay at Drumlanrig, and turn homewards for two or three days, where James Ballantyne met him with such a statement as in some measure relieved his mind.

He then proceeded to fulfil his engagement with Lord Abercorn, whom he encountered travelling in a rather peculiar style between Carlisle and Longtown. The ladies of the family and the household occupied four or five carriages, all drawn by the Marquis's own horses, while the noble Lord himself brought up the rear, mounted on horseback, and decorated with the ribbon of the Garter. On meeting the cavalcade, Scott turned with them, and he was not a little amused when they reached the village of Longtown, which he had ridden through an hour before, with the preparations which he found there made for the dinner of the party. The Marquis's major-domo and cook had arrived there early in the morning, and everything was now arranged for his reception in the little public-house, as nearly as possible in the style of his own mansions. The ducks and geese that had been dabbling three or four hours ago in the village pond, were now ready to make their appearance under numberless disguises ; a regular bill-of-fare flanked the Marquis's allotted cover ; every huckaback towel in the place had been pressed to do service as a napkin ; and the landlady's poor remnants of crockery had been furbished up, and mustered in solemn order on a crazy beaufet, which was to represent a sideboard worthy of Lucullus. I think it worth while to preserve this anecdote, which Scott delighted in telling, as perhaps the last relic of a style of manners now passed away, and never likely to be revived among us.

Having despatched this dinner and his business, Scott again turned southwards, intending to spend a few days at Rokeby ; but on reaching Penrith, the landlord placed a letter in his hands : *ecce iterum*—it was once more a cry of distress from John Ballantyne. Having once more despatched a cheque and a gentle remonstrance to Edinburgh, he rode on to Brough ; but there he received such a painful account of Mrs. Morritt's health, that he abandoned his intention of proceeding to Rokeby ; and indeed it was much better that he should be at Abbotsford again ; for by this time the whole of these affairs had reached a second crisis. Again Constable was consulted ; and now a detailed statement was submitted to him. On examining it, he so expressed himself, that all the partners concurred in the necessity of submitting forthwith to steps not less decisive than painful. Constable again relieved them of some of their crushing stock ; but he frankly owned that he could not do in that way enough to serve them effectually ; and Scott was constrained to

have recourse to the Duke of Buccleuch, who, with the kindest promptitude, gave him a guarantee to the extent of £4,000 immediately available in the money market—the poet insuring his life for that sum, and depositing the insurance as security with the Duke; while John Ballantyne agreed, in place of a leisurely winding-up of the publishing affair, to terminate it with the utmost possible speed, and endeavour to establish himself as an auctioneer of books, antiquities, and objects of vertu. How bitterly must Scott have felt his situation when he wrote thus to John on August 16th: “With regard to the printing, it is my intention to retire from that also so soon as I can possibly do so with safety to myself, and with the regard I shall always entertain for James’s interest. Whatever loss I may sustain will be preferable to the life I have lately led, when I seem surrounded by a sort of magic circle, which neither permits me to remain at home in peace, nor to stir abroad with pleasure. Your first exertion as an auctioneer may probably be on ‘that distinguished, select, and inimitable collection of books, made by an amateur of this city retiring from business.’ I do not feel either health or confidence in my own powers, sufficient to authorise me to take a long price for a new poem, until these affairs shall have been in some measure digested.” There still remained a difficult digestion. His correspondence on to Christmas is deeply chequered; but the nature of the details may be guessed by such as have had experience in the merchandise of literature; and few others, I suppose, will regret their curtailment.

It was in the midst of these distressing occurrences that Scott received two letters—one from Dr. Stanier Clark, private librarian to the Regent, and another, more formal, from the Marquis of Hertford, Lord Chamberlain, announcing his Royal Highness’s desire to nominate him to the office of Poet-laureate, which had just fallen vacant by the death of Mr. Pye. Its emoluments were understood by him to be “£400, or at least £300 a-year;” at that time such an accession of income must have been welcome; and at any rate, what the Sovereign designed as a favour and a distinction could not be lightly waived by Walter Scott. He felt, however, that holding already two lucrative offices in the gift of the Crown, he could not gracefully accept a third, entirely unconnected with his own legal profession, while so many eminent men remained wholly dependent on their literary exertions; and the friends whom he consulted, especially the Duke of Buccleuch, all concurring in

the propriety of these scruples, he declined the royal offer. It is evident that from the first he had had Mr. Southey's case in his contemplation. The moment he made up his mind as to himself, he wrote to Mr. Croker and others in the Prince Regent's confidence, suggesting that name : and he had soon to congratulate his friend of Keswick on assuming the official laurel, which "had been worn of old by Dryden, and more lately by Warton." Mr. Southey, in an essay long subsequent to his death, says : "Sir Walter's conduct was, as it always was, characteristically friendly and generous."

This happened in September. October brought another succession of John Ballantyne's missives, to one of which Scott answers : "For Heaven's sake, treat me as a man, not as a milch-cow ;"—and a third crisis, at the approach of the Martinmas term, was again weathered with the narrowest difficulty—chiefly, as before, through the intervention of Constable. All these annoyances produced no change whatever in his habits of industry. During these anxious months of September, October and November, he kept feeding the press from day to day both with the annotated text of the closing volumes of Swift's works, and with the MS. of his *Life of the Dean*. He had also proceeded to mature in his mind the plan of *The Lord of the Isles*, and executed such a portion of the first canto as gave him confidence to renew his negotiation with Constable for the sale of the whole, or part of its copyright. It was, moreover, at this period that his eye chanced to light once more on the Ashestiel fragment of *Waverley*. He read over those introductory chapters—thought they had been undervalued—and determined to finish the story.

It is proper to mention, that, in the very agony of these perplexities, the unfortunate Maturin received from him a timely succour of £50, rendered doubly acceptable by the kind and judicious letter of advice in which it was enclosed ; and I have before me ample evidence that his benevolence had been extended to other struggling brothers of the trade, even when he must often have had actual difficulty to meet the immediate expenditure of his own family.

The great successes of the Allied Powers in the campaigns of 1813 gave a salutary stimulus to commercial enterprise : and the return of general confidence facilitated many arrangements in which Scott's interests were involved. He, however, needed no such considerations to heighten his patriotic enthusiasm, which overflowed in two songs—one of them never since,

I believe, omitted at any celebration of the anniversary of Mr. Pitt's death—

"O dread was the time and more dreadful the omen,
When the brave on Marengo lay slaughter'd in vain."

He also wrote an address to the Sovereign for the Magistracy of Edinburgh, which was privately acknowledged to the penman, by his Royal Highness's command, as "the most elegant congratulation a sovereign ever received or a subject offered." The Magistrates accordingly found particular graciousness at Carlton House; and on their return (Christmas, 1813) presented Scott with the freedom of his native city and a very handsome piece of plate.

I must, however, open the year 1814 with a melancholy story. Mention has been made in connexion with an unlucky edition of *Beaumont and Fletcher*, of Henry Weber, a German scholar, who, escaping to this country in 1804, from misfortunes in his own, excited Scott's compassion, and was thenceforth furnished, through his means, with literary employment of various sorts. Weber was a man of considerable learning; but Scott, as was his custom, appears to have formed an exaggerated notion of his capacity, and certainly countenanced him, to his own severe cost, in several most unhappy undertakings. When not engaged on things of a more ambitious character, he had acted for ten years as his protector's amanuensis, and when the family were in Edinburgh, he very often dined with them. There was something very interesting in his appearance and manners: he had a fair, open countenance, in which the honesty and the enthusiasm of his nation were alike visible; his demeanour was gentle and modest; and he had not only a stock of curious antiquarian knowledge, but the reminiscences, which he detailed with amusing simplicity, of an early life chequered with many strange-enough adventures. He was, in short, much a favourite with Scott and all the household; and was invited to dine with them so frequently, chiefly because his friend was aware that he had an unhappy propensity to drinking, and was anxious to keep him away from places where he might have been more likely to indulge it. This vice had been growing on him; and of late Scott had found it necessary to make some rather severe remonstrances about habits which were at once injuring his health and interrupting his literary industry. They had, however, parted kindly when Scott left Edinburgh at Christmas; and the day after his return,

Weber attended him as usual in his library—being employed in transcribing extracts during several hours, while his friend, seated over against him, continued working at the *Life of Swift*. The light beginning to fail, Scott threw himself back in his chair, and was about to ring for candles, when he observed the German's eyes fixed upon him with an unusual solemnity of expression. "Weber," said he, "what's the matter with you?" "Mr. Scott," said Weber, rising, "you have long insulted me, and I can bear it no longer. I have brought a pair of pistols with me, and must insist on your taking one of them instantly;" and with that he produced the weapons, which had been deposited under his chair, and laid one of them on Scott's manuscript. "You are mistaken, I think," said Scott, "in your way of setting about this affair—but no matter. It can, however, be no part of your object to annoy Mrs. Scott and the children; therefore, if you please, we will put the pistols into the drawer till after dinner, and then arrange to go out together like gentlemen." Weber answered with equal coolness, "I believe that will be better," and laid the second pistol also on the table. Scott locked them both in his desk, and said, "I am glad you have felt the propriety of what I suggested—let me only request farther, that nothing may occur while we are at dinner to give my wife any suspicion of what has been passing." Weber again assented, and Scott withdrew to his dressing-room, from which he despatched a message to one of Weber's companions,—and then dinner was served, and Weber joined the circle as usual. He conducted himself with composure, and everything seemed to go on in the ordinary way, until whisky and hot water being produced, Scott, instead of inviting his guest to help himself, mixed two moderate tumblers of toddy, and handed one of them to Weber, who, upon that, started up with a furious countenance, but instantly sat down again, and when Mrs. Scott expressed her fear that he was ill, answered placidly that he was liable to spasms, but that the pain was gone. He then took the glass, eagerly gulped down its contents, and pushed it back to Scott. At this moment the friend who had been sent for made his appearance; and Weber, on seeing him enter the room, rushed past him and out of the house, without stopping to put on his hat. The friend, who pursued instantly, came up with him at the end of the street, and did all he could to soothe his agitation, but in vain. The same evening he was obliged to be put into a strait-waistcoat; and though in a few days he

exhibited such symptoms of recovery that he was allowed to go by himself to pay a visit in the North of England, he there soon relapsed, and continued ever afterwards a hopeless lunatic, being supported to the end of his life, in June, 1818, at Scott's expense, in an asylum at York.

On July 1st, 1814, the *Swift*, nineteen volumes octavo, at length issued from the press. This adventure, undertaken by Constable in 1808, had been proceeded in during all the variety of their personal relations, and now came forth when author and publisher felt more warmly towards each other than perhaps they had ever before done. The impression was of 1,250 copies; and a reprint of similar extent was called for in 1824. Scott added to his edition many admirable pieces, both in prose and verse, which had never before been printed, and still more, which had escaped notice amidst old bundles of pamphlets and broadsides. To the illustration of these and of all the better known writings of the Dean, he brought the same qualifications which had, by general consent, distinguished his *Dryden*: "uniting," as *The Edinburgh Review* expresses it, "to the minute knowledge and patient research of the Malones and Chalmerses, a vigour of judgment and a vivacity of style to which they had no pretensions." His biographical narrative, introductory essays, and notes show, indeed, an intimacy of acquaintance with the obscurest details of the political, social, and literary history of the period of Queen Anne, which it is impossible to consider without feeling a lively regret that he never accomplished a long-cherished purpose of editing Pope. It has been specially unfortunate for that "true deacon of the craft," as Scott often called him, that first Goldsmith, and then Scott, should have taken up, only to abandon it, the project of writing his life and annotating his works.

Before Christmas Erskine had perused the greater part of the first volume, and expressed his decided opinion that *Waverley* would prove the most popular of all his friend's writings. The MS. was forthwith copied by John Ballantyne, and sent to press. As soon as a volume was printed, Ballantyne conveyed it to Constable, who did not for a moment doubt from what pen it proceeded, but took a few days to consider of the matter, and then offered £700 for the copyright. When we recollect what the state of novel literature in those days was, and that the only exceptions to its mediocrity, the *Irish Tales* of Miss Edgeworth, however appreciated in refined circles, had a circulation so limited that she had never realised a tithe of £700 by

the best of them—it must be allowed that Constable's offer was a liberal one. Scott's answer, however, was that £700 was too much in case the novel should not be successful, and too little if it should. He added, "If our fat friend had said £1,000, I should have been staggered." John did not forget to convey this last hint to Constable, but the latter did not choose to act upon it; and ultimately agreed to an equal division of profits between himself and the author.

There was a considerable pause between the finishing of the first volume and the beginning of the second. Constable, eager about an extensive Supplement to his *Encyclopædia Britannica*, earnestly requested Scott to undertake a few articles; and, anxious to gratify the generous bookseller, he laid aside his tale until he had finished two essays—those on Chivalry and the Drama. They were written in the course of April and May, and he received for each of them £100.

A letter of July 9th to Mr. Morritt gives in more exact detail than the author's own recollection could supply in 1830, the history of the completion of *Waverley*: which had then been two days published. "I must now," he says, "account for my own laziness, by referring you to a small anonymous sort of a novel, which you will receive by the mail of this day. It was a very old attempt of mine to embody some traits of those characters and manners peculiar to Scotland, the last remnants of which vanished during my own youth. I had written great part of the first volumes, and sketched other passages, when I mislaid the MS., and only found it by the merest accident as I was rummaging the drawers of an old cabinet; and I took the fancy of finishing it. It has made a very strong impression here, and the good people of Edinburgh are busied in tracing the author, and in finding out originals for the portraits it contains. Jeffrey has offered to make oath that it is mine, and another great critic has tendered his affidavit *ex contrario*; so that these authorities have divided the Gude Town. Let me know your opinion about it. The truth is that this sort of muddling work amuses me, and I am something in the condition of Joseph Surface, who was embarrassed by getting himself too good a reputation; for many things may please people well enough anonymously, which if they have me in the title-page, would just give me that sort of ill name which precedes hanging—and that would be in many respects inconvenient, if I thought of again trying a *grande opus*."

The gallant composure with which Scott, when he had

dismissed a work from his desk, awaited the decision of the public—and the healthy elasticity of spirit with which he could meanwhile turn his whole zeal upon new or different objects—are among the features in his character which will always, I believe, strike the student of literary history as most remarkable. It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance to his fortunes of this, his first novel. Yet before he had heard of its reception in the south, except the whisper of one partial friend, he started on a voyage which was likely to occupy two months, and during which he could hardly expect to receive any letters.

He had been invited to accompany the Commissioners of the Northern Lighthouses in their annual expedition; and as its programme included the Hebrides, and he had already made some progress in *The Lord of the Isles*, the opportunity for refreshing and enlarging his acquaintance with that region would alone have been a strong temptation. But there were many others. The trip was also to embrace the isles of Shetland and Orkney, and a vast extent of the mainland coasts, no part of which he had ever seen—or but for such an offer might ever have much chance of seeing. The Commissioners were all familiar friends of his—William Erskine, then Sheriff of the Orkneys, Robert Hamilton, Sheriff of Lanarkshire, Adam Duff, Sheriff of Forfarshire; but the real chief was the Surveyor-General, the celebrated engineer Mr. Stevenson, and Scott anticipated special pleasure in his society. “I delight,” he told Morritt, “in these professional men of talent. They always give you some new lights by the peculiarity of their habits and studies—so different from the people who are rounded and smoothed, and ground down for conversation, and who can say all that every other person says—and no more.”

To this voyage we owe many of the most striking passages in *The Lord of the Isles*, and the noble romance of *The Pirate* wholly. The leisure of the yacht allowed him to keep a very minute diary, from which he gave sundry extracts in his notes to both these works, and which may now be read entire in the larger memoirs of his life and correspondence. It abounds in interest—in sketches of scenery which could have come from his hand alone—in most curious details of insular manners: but its chief value is in its artless portraiture of the penman. I question if any man ever drew his own character more fully or more pleasingly. We have before us, according to the scene and occasion, the poet, the antiquary, the magistrate, the planter, and the agriculturist; but everywhere the warm yet sagacious

philanthropist—everywhere the courtesy, based on the unselfishness, of the thoroughbred gentleman.

A few days before his voyage ended, he heard casually of the death of Harriet, Duchess of Buccleuch, who ever since the days of Lasswade had been his most kind friend. The sad intelligence was confirmed on his arrival in the Clyde, by a most touching and manly letter from the Duke. Its closing paragraph has these sentences: "Endeavouring to the last to conceal her suffering, she evinced a fortitude, a resignation, a Christian courage, beyond all power of description. Her last injunction was to attend to her poor people."

The Duke survived for some years, and he continued in the line of conduct which he had from the first resolved upon; but he never recovered the blow: and this no one perceived more clearly than Scott.

As he passed through Edinburgh, the negotiation as to *The Lord of the Isles*, which had been protracted through several months, was completed: Constable agreeing to give fifteen hundred guineas for one half of the copyright, while the other moiety was retained by the author. The same sum had been offered at an early stage of the affair, but it was not until now accepted, in consequence of the earnest wish of Messrs. Ballantyne to saddle the publisher of the new poem with another pyramid of their old "quire stock,"—which, however, Constable ultimately persisted in refusing. It may easily be believed that John's management during a six weeks' absence had been such as to render it doubly convenient for the Poet to have this matter settled; and it may also be supposed that the progress of *Waverley* during that interval had tended to put the chief parties in good humour with each other. For nothing can be more unfounded than the statement repeated in various memoirs of Scott's life, that the sale of the first edition of this immortal Tale was slow. It appeared on July 7th, and the whole impression (1,000 copies) had disappeared within five weeks; an occurrence then unprecedented in the case of an anonymous novel, put forth at what is called among publishers *the dead season*. A second edition of 2,000 copies was at least projected by the 24th of the same month:—that appeared before the end of August, and it too had gone off so rapidly that Scott now, in September, found Constable eager to treat, on the same terms as before, for a third of 1,000 copies. This third edition was published in October; and when a fourth of the like extent was called for in November, I find Scott writing to John Ballantyne: "I suppose

Constable won't quarrel with a work on which he has netted £612 in four months, with a certainty of making it £1,000 before the year is out." It would be idle to enumerate subsequent reprints. Well might Constable regret that he had not ventured to offer £1,000 for the whole copyright of *Waverley*!

The only private friends originally intrusted with his secret appear to have been Erskine and Morritt. But there was one with whom it would, of course, have been more than vain to affect any concealment. On the publication of the third edition I find him writing thus to his brother, then in Canada: "Dear Tom, a novel here, called *Waverley*, has had enormous success. I sent you a copy, and will send you another with *The Lord of the Isles*, which will be out at Christmas. The success which it has had, with some other circumstances, has induced people

'To lay the bantling at a certain door,
Where lying store of faults, they'd fain heap more.' *

You will guess for yourself how far such a report has credibility; but by no means give the weight of your opinion to the Transatlantic public; for you must know there is also a counter-report, that *you* have written the said *Waverley*. Send me a novel intermixing your exuberant and natural humour, with any incidents and descriptions of scenery you may see—particularly with characters and traits of manners. I will give it all the cobbling that is necessary, and, if you do but exert yourself, I have not the least doubt it will be worth £500; and, to encourage you, you may, when you send the MS., draw on me for £100, at fifty days' sight, so that your labours will at any rate not be quite thrown away. You have more fun and descriptive talent than most people; and all that you want—*i.e.* the mere practice of composition—I can supply, or the devil's in it. Keep this matter a dead secret, and look knowing when *Waverley* is spoken of. If you are not Sir John Falstaff, you are as good a man as he, and may therefore face Colville of the Dale. You may believe I don't want to make you the author of a book you have never seen; but if people will, upon their own judgment, suppose so, and also on their own judgment give you £500 to try your hand on a novel, I don't see that you are a pin's-point the worse. Mind that your MS. attends the draft. I am perfectly serious and confident, that in two or three months you might clear the cobs. I beg my compliments to the hero who is afraid of Jeffrey's scalping-knife."

* Garrick's Epilogue to *Polly Honeycombe*, 1760.

In truth, no one of Scott's intimate friends ever had, or could have had, the slightest doubt as to the parentage of *Waverley* : nor, although he abstained from communicating the fact formally to most of them, did he ever affect any real concealment in the case of such persons ; nor, when any circumstance arose which rendered the withholding of direct confidence on the subject incompatible with perfect freedom of feeling on both sides, did he hesitate to make the avowal. Nor do I believe that the mystification ever answered much purpose among literary men of eminence beyond the circle of his personal acquaintance. But it would be difficult to suppose that he had ever wished that to be otherwise ; it was sufficient for him to set the mob of readers at gaze, and above all, to escape the annoyance of having productions, actually known to be his, made the daily and hourly topics of discussion in his presence—especially (perhaps) productions in a new walk, to which it might be naturally supposed that Lord Byron's poetical successes had diverted him.

Mr. Jeffrey had known Scott from his youth—and in reviewing *Waverley* he was at no pains to conceal his conviction of its authorship. He quarrelled as usual with carelessness of style and some inartificialities of plot, but rendered justice to the substantial merits of the work. *The Quarterly* was far less favourable. With this remarkable exception, the censors of any note were not slow to confess their belief that, under a hackneyed name and trivial form, there had appeared a work of original creative genius, worthy of being placed by the side of the very few real masterpieces of prose fiction. Loftier romance was never blended with easier, quainter humour, by Cervantes. In his familiar delineations he had combined the strength of Smollett with the native elegance and unaffected pathos of Goldsmith ; in his darker scenes he had revived that real tragedy which appeared to have left our theatre with the age of Shakespeare ; and elements of interest so diverse had been blended and interwoven with that nameless grace, which, more surely perhaps than even the highest perfection in the command of any one strain of sentiment, marks the master-mind cast in Nature's most felicitous mould.

CHAPTER VIII

Publication of *The Lord of the Isles* and *Guy Mannering*—Meeting with Byron—Carlton House Dinner—Excursion to Paris—Publication of *The Field of Waterloo*—*Paul's Letters*—*The Antiquary*—*Harold the Dauntless*—and the first *Tales of my Landlord*. 1815-1816.

THE voyage and these good news sent him back in high vigour to his desk at Abbotsford. For lighter work he had on hand *The Memorie of the Somervilles*, a very curious specimen of family history, which he had undertaken to edit at the request of his neighbour Lord Somerville. This was published in October. His serious labour was on *The Lord of the Isles*: of which only three cantos had been written when he concluded his bargain with Constable. He had carried with him in the yacht some proof-sheets of a little book that Ballantyne was printing, entitled *Poems illustrative of Traditions in Galloway and Ayrshire, by Joseph Train, Supervisor of Excise at Castle-Stewart*: and, being struck with the notes, wrote, on his arrival at home, to the author, whom he had never seen, requesting information concerning the ruins of Turnberry, on the Ayrshire coast, of which he wished to say something in connection with one of Bruce's adventures in the forthcoming poem. Mr. Train did much more than Scott had meant to ask;—for he had never himself been at Turnberry—but instantly rode over the hills to the spot, and transmitted ample details of the castle and all its legends:—not omitting a local superstition, that on the anniversary of the night when Bruce landed there from Arran, the meteoric gleam which had attended his voyage reappeared unfailingly in the same quarter of the heavens. What use Scott made of this and other parts of Mr. Train's paper, we see from the fifth canto of *The Lord of the Isles* and its notes: and the date of the communication (November 2nd) is therefore important as to the history of the composition; but this was the beginning of a correspondence which had many other happy consequences. From this time the worthy supervisor, who had had many literary plans and schemes, dropped all notion of authorship in his own person, and devoted his leisure with most generous assiduity to the collection of whatever stories he fancied likely to be of use to his new acquaintance, who, after one or two meetings, had impressed him with unbounded enthusiasm of attachment. To no one individual did Scott owe so much of the materials of his novels: and one of the very earliest packets

from Castle-Stewart (November 7th) contained a ballad called *The Durham Garland*, which, reviving Scott's recollection of a story told in his youth by a servant of his father's, suggested the groundwork of the second of the series. James Ballantyne, in writing by desire of "the Author of *Waverley*" to Miss Edgeworth, with a copy of the fourth edition of that novel (November 11th), mentioned that another might soon be expected; but, as he added, that it would treat of manners more ancient than those of 1745, it is clear that no outline resembling that of *Guy Mannering* was then in the printer's view: most probably Scott had signified to him that he designed to handle the period of the Covenanters. There can, I think, be as little doubt that he began *Guy Mannering* as soon as Train's paper of November 7th reached him.

He writes, on December 25th, to Constable that he "had corrected the last proofs of *The Lord of the Isles*, and was setting out for Abbotsford to refresh the machine." And in what did his refreshment of the machine consist? The poem was published on January 15th; and he says, *on that day*, to Morritt, "I want to shake myself free of *Waverley*, and accordingly have made a considerable exertion to finish an odd little tale within such time as will mystify the public, I trust—unless they suppose me to be Briareus. Two volumes are already printed, and the only persons in my confidence, W. Erskine and Ballantyne, are of opinion that it is much more interesting than *Waverley*. It is a tale of private life, and only varied by the perilous exploits of smugglers and excisemen." *Guy Mannering* was published on February 24th—that is, exactly two months after *The Lord of the Isles* was dismissed from the author's desk; and—making but a narrow allowance for the operations of the transcriber, printer, bookseller, etc.—I think the dates I have gathered together confirm the accuracy of what I have often heard Scott say, that his second novel "was the work of six weeks at a Christmas." Such was his recipe "for refreshing the machine."

I am sorry to have to add, that this severity of labour, like the repetition of it which had deplorable effects at a later period, was the result of difficulties about the discount of John Ballantyne's bills.

Finding that Constable would not meet his views as to some of these matters, Mr. John suggested to Scott that some other house might prove more accommodating if he were permitted to offer them not only the new novel, but the next edition of the

established favourite *Waverley* : but upon this ingenious proposition Scott at once set his *veto*. "Dear John," he writes, "your expedients are all wretched, as far as regards me. I never will give Constable, or any one, room to say I have broken my word with him in the slightest degree. If I lose everything else, I will at least keep my honour unblemished ; and I do hold myself bound in honour to offer him a *Waverley*, while he shall continue to comply with the conditions annexed." The result was, that Messrs. Longman undertook the *Guy Mannering*, relieving John of some of his encumbering stock ; but Longman, in compliance with Scott's wish, admitted Constable to a share in the adventure ; and with one or two exceptions, originating in circumstances nearly similar, the house of Constable published all the subsequent novels.

I must not, however, forget that *The Lord of the Isles* was published a month before *Guy Mannering*. The poem was received with an interest much heightened by the recent and growing success of the mysterious *Waverley*. Its appearance, so rapidly following that novel, and accompanied with the announcement of another prose tale, just about to be published, by the same hand, puzzled and confounded the mob of dulness. The more sagacious few said to themselves—Scott is making one serious effort more in his old line, and by this it will be determined whether he does or does not altogether renounce that for his new one.

This poem is now, I believe, about as popular as *Rokeby* ; but it has never reached the same station in general favour with *The Lay*, *Marmion*, or *The Lady of the Lake*. The instant consumption of 1,800 quartos, followed by octavo reprints to the number of 12,000, would, in the case of almost any other author, have been splendid success ; but as compared with what he had previously experienced, even in his *Rokeby*, and still more so as compared with the enormous circulation at once attained by Lord Byron's early tales, which were then following each other in almost breathless succession, the falling off was decided.

If January brought "disappointment," there was abundant consolation in store for February, 1815. *Guy Mannering* was received with eager curiosity, and pronounced by acclamation fully worthy to share the honours of *Waverley*. The easy transparent flow of its style ; the beautiful simplicity, and here and there the wild solemn magnificence of its sketches of scenery ; the rapid, ever-heightening interest of the narrative ; the unaffected kindliness of feeling, the manly purity of thought,

everywhere mingled with a gentle humour and a homely sagacity ; but, above all, the rich variety and skilful contrast of characters and manners at once fresh in fiction, and stamped with the unforgeable seal of truth and nature ; these were charms that spoke to every heart and mind ; and the few murmurs of pedantic criticisms were lost in the voice of general delight, which never fails to welcome the invention that introduces to the sympathy of imagination a new group of immortal realities.

The first edition was, like that of *Waverley*, in three little volumes, with a humility of paper and printing which the meanest novelist would now disdain to imitate ; the price a guinea. The 2,000 copies of which it consisted were sold the day after the publication ; and within three months came a second and a third impression, making together 5,000 copies more. Of the subsequent vogue it is needless to speak.

On the rising of the Court of Session in March, Scott went by sea to London with his wife and their eldest girl. Six years had elapsed since he last appeared in the metropolis ; and brilliant as his reception had then been, it was still more so on the present occasion.

And now took place James Ballantyne's "mighty consummation of the meeting of the two bards." "Report," says Scott to Moore, "had prepared me to meet a man of peculiar habits and a quick temper, and I had some doubts whether we were likely to suit each other in society. I was most agreeably disappointed in this respect. I found Lord Byron in the highest degree courteous, and even kind. We met for an hour or two almost daily, in Mr. Murray's drawing-room, and found a great deal to say to each other. We also met frequently in parties and evening society, so that for about two months I had the advantage of a considerable intimacy with this distinguished individual. Our sentiments agreed a good deal, except upon the subjects of religion and politics, upon neither of which I was inclined to believe that Lord Byron entertained very fixed opinions. I remember saying to him, that I really thought that if he lived a few years he would alter his sentiments. He answered, rather sharply—'I suppose you are one of those who prophesy I shall turn Methodist.' I replied—'No ; I don't expect your conversion to be of such an ordinary kind. I would rather look to see you retreat upon the Catholic faith, and distinguish yourself by the austerity of your penances.' He smiled gravely, and seemed to allow I might be right. On

politics, he used sometimes to express a high strain of what is now called Liberalism; but it appeared to me that the pleasure it afforded him, as a vehicle for displaying his wit and satire against individuals in office, was at the bottom of this habit of thinking, rather than any real conviction of the political principles on which he talked. He was certainly proud of his rank and ancient family, and, in that respect, as much an aristocrat as was consistent with good sense and good breeding. Some disgusts, how adopted I know not, seemed to me to have given this peculiar and (as it appeared to me) contradictory cast of mind; but, at heart, I would have termed Byron a patrician on principle. . . . Lord Byron's reading did not seem to me to have been very extensive, either in poetry or history. Having the advantage of him in that respect, and possessing a good competent share of such reading as is little read, I was sometimes able to put under his eyes objects which had for him the interest of novelty. I remember particularly repeating to him the fine poem of Hardyknute, an imitation of the old Scottish ballad, with which he was so much affected, that some one who was in the same apartment asked me what I could possibly have been telling Byron by which he was so much agitated. . . . Like the old heroes in Homer, we exchanged gifts. I gave Byron a beautiful dagger mounted with gold, which had been the property of the redoubted Elfi Bey. But I was to play the part of *Diomed* in *The Iliad*, for Byron sent me, some time after, a large sepulchral vase of silver. It was full of dead men's bones, and had inscriptions on two sides of the base. One ran thus: 'The bones contained in this urn were found in certain ancient sepulchres within the long walls of Athens, in the month of February, 1811.' The other face bears the lines of Juvenal—'*Expende—quot libras in duce summo invenies?—Mors sola fatetur quantula sint hominum corpuscula.*' To these I have added a third inscription, in these words—'The gift of Lord Byron to Walter Scott.' There was a letter with this vase, more valuable to me than the gift itself, from the kindness with which the donor expressed himself towards me. I left it naturally in the urn with the bones; but it is now missing. As the theft was not of a nature to be practised by a mere domestic, I am compelled to suspect the inhospitality of some individual of higher station, most gratuitously exercised certainly, since, after what I have here said, no one will probably choose to boast of possessing this literary curiosity. We had a good deal of laughing, I remember,

on what the public might be supposed to think, or say, concerning the gloomy and ominous nature of our mutual gifts. He was often melancholy—almost gloomy. When I observed him in this humour, I used either to wait till it went off of its own accord, or till some natural and easy mode occurred of leading him into conversation, when the shadows almost always left his countenance, like the mist rising from a landscape. In conversation, he was very animated. . . . I think I also remarked in his temper starts of suspicion, when he seemed to pause and consider whether there had not been a secret, and perhaps offensive, meaning in something casually said to him. In this case I also judged it best to let his mind, like a troubled spring, work itself clear, which it did in a minute or two. I was considerably older, you will recollect, than my noble friend, and had no reason to fear his misconstruing my sentiments towards him, nor had I ever the slightest reason to doubt that they were kindly returned on his part. If I had occasion to be mortified by the display of genius which threw into the shade such pretensions as I was then supposed to possess, I might console myself that, in my own case, the materials of mental happiness had been mingled in a greater proportion. . . . I have always continued to think that a crisis of life was arrived, in which a new career of fame was opened to him, and that had he been permitted to start upon it, he would have obliterated the memory of such parts of his life as friends would wish to forget."

It was also in the spring of 1815 that Scott had, for the first time, the honour of being presented to the Prince Regent. His Royal Highness, on reading his Edinburgh Address, had said to William Dundas, that "Walter Scott's charming behaviour about the laureateship made him doubly desirous of seeing him at Carlton House:" and there had been other messages from the Prince's librarian. On hearing from Mr. Croker (then Secretary to the Admiralty) that Scott was to be in town by the middle of March, the Prince said—"Let me know when he comes, and I'll get up a snug little dinner that will suit him;" and, after he had been presented and graciously received at the *levée*, he was invited to dinner accordingly, through his excellent friend Mr. Adam (afterward Lord Chief Commissioner of the Jury Court in Scotland), who at that time held a confidential office in the royal household. The Regent had consulted with Mr. Adam also as to the composition of the party. "Let us have," said he, "just a few friends of his own—and the more Scotch the better;" and both the Chief Commissioner and Mr. Croker assure me

that the party was the most interesting and agreeable one in their recollection. It comprised, I believe, the Duke of York—the late Duke of Gordon (then Marquis of Huntly)—the late Marquis of Hertford (then Lord Yarmouth)—the Earl of Fife—and Scott's early friend Lord Melville. "The Prince and Scott," says Mr. Croker, "were the two most brilliant storytellers in their several ways that I have ever happened to meet; they were both aware of their *forte*, and both exerted themselves that evening with delightful effect. On going home, I really could not decide which of them had shone the most. The Regent was enchanted with Scott, as Scott with him; and on all his subsequent visits to London, he was a frequent guest at the royal table." The Lord Chief Commissioner remembers that the Prince was particularly delighted with the poet's anecdotes of the old Scotch judges and lawyers, which his Royal Highness sometimes *capped* by ludicrous traits of certain ermined sages of his own acquaintance.

The Regent, as was his custom with those he most delighted to honour, uniformly addressed the poet, even at their first dinner, by his Christian name, "Walter."

Before he left town, he again dined at Carlton House, when the party was a still smaller one than before, and the merriment, if possible, still more free.

Before he returned to Edinburgh, on May 22nd, the Regent sent him a gold snuff-box, set in brilliants, with a medallion of his Royal Highness's head on the lid, "as a testimony" (writes Mr. Adam, in transmitting it) "of the high opinion his Royal Highness entertains of your genius and merit."

Scott's friends were well aware of his resolution to visit the Continent as soon as the session was over; and he very kindly accepted the proposal of three young neighbours of Tweedside who were eager to make the excursion in his society. With these gentlemen, Alexander Pringle of Whytbank (since M.P. for Selkirkshire), Robert Bruce (now Sheriff of Argyle), and his kinsman, the late accomplished John Scott of Gala, he left Edinburgh accordingly on July 27th. They travelled by the stage-coach, and took the route of Cambridge; for Gala and Whytbank, both members of that university, were desirous of shewing its architecture to their friend. After this wish had been gratified, they proceeded to Harwich.

Before Scott reached Harwich, he received Constable's acceptance of an offer to compose, during the journey, a series of sketches, which he undertook to have ready for publication "by

the second week of September ;” and thenceforth he threw his daily letters to his wife into the form of communications meant for an imaginary group, consisting of a spinster sister, a statistical laird, a rural clergyman of the Presbyterian Kirk, and a brother, a veteran officer on half-pay. The rank of this last personage corresponded, however, exactly with that of his own elder brother, John Scott, who also, like the Major of the book, had served in the Duke of York’s unfortunate campaign of 1797 ; the sister is only a slender disguise for his aunt Christian Rutherford, already often mentioned ; Lord Sommerville, long President of the Board of Agriculture, was Paul’s laird ; and the shrewd and unbigoted Dr. Douglas of Galashiels was his “minister of the gospel.” These epistles, after having been devoured by the little circle at Abbotsford, were transmitted to Major John Scott, his mother, and Miss Rutherford, in Edinburgh ; from their hands they passed to those of James Ballantyne and Mr. Erskine, both of whom assured me that the copy ultimately sent to the press consisted, in great part, of the identical sheets that had successively reached Melrose through the post. The rest had of course been, as Ballantyne expresses it, “somewhat cobbled ;” but, on the whole, *Paul’s Letters to his Kinsfolk* are to be considered as a true and faithful journal of this expedition. The kindest of husbands and fathers never portrayed himself with more unaffected truth than in this vain effort, if such he really fancied he was making, to sustain the character of “a cross old bachelor.” The whole man, just as he was, breathes in every line, with all his compassionate and benevolent sympathy of heart, all his sharpness of observation, and sober shrewdness of reflection ; all his enthusiasm for Nature, for country life, for simple manners and simple pleasures, mixed up with an equally glowing enthusiasm, at which many may smile, for the tiniest relics of feudal antiquity—and last, not least, a pulse of physical rapture for the “circumstance of war,” which bears witness to the blood of Boltfoot and Fire-the-Braes. I shall not trespass on the reader of that delightful record, except by a few particulars which I owe to the juniors of the party.

Paul modestly acknowledges in his last letter the personal attentions which he received, while in Paris, from Lords Cathcart, Aberdeen, and Castlereagh ; and hints that, through their intervention, he had witnessed several of the splendid *fêtes* given by the Duke of Wellington, where he saw half the crowned heads of Europe grouped among the gallant soldiers who had cut a way for them to the guilty capital of France. Scott’s reception, how-

ever, had been distinguished to a degree of which Paul's language gives no notion. The Noble Lords above named welcomed him with cordial satisfaction ; and the Duke of Wellington, to whom he was first presented by Sir John Malcolm, treated him then, and ever afterwards, with a kindness and confidence, which, I have often heard him say, he considered as "the highest distinction of his life." He used to tell, with great effect, the circumstances of his introduction to the Emperor Alexander, at a dinner given by the Earl of Cathcart. Scott appeared, on that occasion, in the blue and red dress of the Selkirkshire Lieutenantancy ; and the Czar's first question, glancing at his lameness, was, "In what affair were you wounded ?" Scott signified that he suffered from a natural infirmity ; upon which the Emperor said, "I thought Lord Cathcart mentioned that you had served." Scott observed that the Earl looked a little embarrassed at this, and promptly answered, "Oh yes ; in a certain sense I have served—that is, in the yeomanry cavalry ; a home force resembling the Landwehr, or Landsturm."—"Under what commander ?"—"Sous M. le Chevalier Rae."—"Were you ever engaged ?"—"In some slight actions—such as the battle of the Cross Causeway and the affair of Moredun-Mill."—"This," says Mr. Pringle of Whytbank, "was, as he saw in Lord Cathcart's face, quite sufficient, so he managed to turn the conversation to some other subject." It was at the same dinner that he first met Platoff,* who seemed to take a great fancy to him, though, adds my friend, "I really don't think they had any common language to converse in." Next day, however, when Pringle and Scott were walking together in the Rue de la Paix, the Hetman happened to come up, cantering with some of his Cossacks ; as soon as he saw Scott, he jumped off his horse, leaving it to the Pulk, and, running up to him, kissed him on each side of the cheek with extraordinary demonstrations of affection—and then made him understand, through an aide-de-camp, that he wished him to join his staff at the next great review, when he would take care to mount him on the gentlest of his Ukraine horses:

* Scott acknowledges, in a note to *St. Ronan's Well* (vol. i. p. 252), that he took from Platoff this portrait of Mr. Touchwood :—"His face, which at the distance of a yard or two seemed hale and smooth, appeared, when closely examined, to be seamed with a million of wrinkles, crossing each other in every direction possible, but as fine as if drawn by the point of a very fine needle." Thus did every little peculiarity remain treasured in his memory, to be used in due time for giving the air of minute reality to some imaginary personage.

It will seem less surprising that Scott should have been honoured with much attention by the leading soldiers and statesmen of Germany then in Paris. The fame of his poetry had already been established for some years in that country. Yet it may be doubted whether Blücher had heard of *Marmion* any more than Platoff; and old Blücher struck Scott's fellow-travellers as taking more interest in him than any foreign general, except only the Hetman.

A striking passage in Paul's tenth letter indicates the high notion which Scott had formed of the personal qualities of the Prince of Orange. After depicting, with almost prophetic accuracy, the dangers to which the then recent union of Holland and Belgium must be exposed, he concludes with expressing his hope that the firmness and sagacity of the King of the Netherlands, and the admiration which his heir's character and bearing had already excited among all, even Belgian observers, might ultimately prove effective in redeeming this difficult experiment from the usual failure of "*arrondissements*, indemnities, and all the other terms of modern date, under sanction of which cities and districts, and even kingdoms, have been passed from one government to another, as the property of lands or stock is transferred by a bargain between private parties."

It is not less curious to compare, with the subsequent course of affairs in France, the following brief hint in Paul's sixteenth letter:—"The general rallying point of the *Liberalistes* is an avowed dislike to the present monarch and his immediate connexions. They will sacrifice, they pretend, so much to the general inclinations of Europe, as to select a king from the Bourbon race; but he must be one of their own choosing, and the Duke of Orleans is most familiar in their mouths." Thus, in its very bud, had his eye detected the *conjuración de quince ans*!

As yet, the literary reputation of Scott had made but little way among the French nation; but some few of their eminent men vied even with the enthusiastic Germans in their courteous and unwearied attentions to him. The venerable Chevalier, in particular, seemed anxious to embrace every opportunity of acting as his cicerone; and many mornings were spent in exploring, under his guidance, the most remarkable scenes and objects of historical and antiquarian interest both in Paris and its neighbourhood. He several times also entertained Scott and his young companions at dinner; but the last of those dinners was thoroughly poisoned by a preliminary circumstance. The poet, on

entering the saloon, was presented to a stranger, whose physiognomy struck him as the most hideous he had ever seen; nor was his disgust lessened, when he found, a few minutes afterwards, that he had undergone the *accolade* of David "of the blood-stained brush."

From Paris, Mr. Bruce and Mr. Pringle went on to Switzerland, leaving the Poet and Gala to return home together, which they did by way of Dieppe, Brighton, and London. It was here, on September 14th, that Scott had his last meeting with Byron. He carried his young friend in the morning to call on Lord Byron, who agreed to dine with them at their hotel, where he met also Charles Mathews and Daniel Terry. Gala has recorded it in his note-book as the most interesting day he ever spent. "How I did stare," he says, "at Byron's beautiful pale face, like a spirit's—good or evil. But he was *bitter*—what a contrast to Scott! Among other anecdotes of British prowess and spirit, Scott mentioned that a young gentleman ——— had been awfully shot in the head while conveying an order from the Duke, and yet staggered on, and delivered his message when at the point of death. 'Ha!' said Byron, 'I daresay he could do as well as most people without his head—it was never of much use to him.' Waterloo did not delight him, probably—and Scott could talk or think of scarcely anything else."

Mathews accompanied them as far as Warwick and Kenilworth, both of which castles the Poet had seen before, but now re-examined with particular curiosity. They spent a night at Sheffield; and early next morning Scott sallied forth to provide himself with a planter's knife of the most complex contrivance and finished workmanship. Having secured one to his mind, and which for many years after was his constant pocket companion, he wrote his name on a card, "Walter Scott, Abbotsford," and directed it to be engraved on the handle. On his mentioning this acquisition at breakfast, young Gala expressed his desire to equip himself in like fashion, and was directed to the shop accordingly. When he had purchased a similar knife, and produced his name in turn for the engraver, the master cutler eyed the signature for a moment, and exclaimed—"John Scott of Gala! Well, I hope your ticket may serve me in as good stead as another Mr. Scott's has just done. Upon my word, one of my best men, an honest fellow from the North, went out of his senses when he saw it—he offered me a week's work if I would let him keep it to himself—and I took

Saunders at his word." Scott used to talk of this as one of the most gratifying compliments he ever received in his literary capacity.

Reaching Abbotsford, Scott found with his family his old friend, Mr. Skene of Rubislaw, who had expected him to come home sooner, and James Ballantyne, who had arrived with a copious budget of bills, calendars, booksellers' letters, and proof-sheets. From each of these visitors' *memoranda* I now extract an anecdote. Mr. Skene's is of a small enough matter, but still it places the man so completely before myself, that I am glad he thought it worth setting down. "During Scott's absence," says his friend, "his wife had had the tiny drawing-room of the cottage fitted up with new chintz furniture—everything had been set out in the best style—and she and her girls had been looking forward to the pleasure which they supposed the little surprise of the arrangements would give him. He was received in the spruce fresh room, set himself comfortably down in the chair prepared for him, and remained in the full enjoyment of his own fireside, and a return to his family circle, without the least consciousness that any change had taken place—until, at length, Mrs. Scott's patience could hold out no longer, and his attention was expressly called to it. The vexation he showed at having caused such a disappointment, struck me as amiably characteristic—and in the course of the evening he every now and then threw out some word of admiration to reconsole *mamma*."

Two years after this time, when Mr. Washington Irving visited Scott, he walked with him to a quarry, where his people were at work. "The face of the humblest dependent," he says, "brightened at his approach—all paused from their labour to have a pleasant 'crack wi' the laird.' Among the rest was a tall straight old fellow, with a healthful complexion and silver hairs, and a small round-crowned white hat. He had been about to shoulder a hod, but paused, and stood looking at Scott with a slight sparkling of his blue eye as if waiting his turn; for the old fellow knew he was a favourite. Scott accosted him in an affable tone, and asked for a pinch of snuff. The old man drew forth a horn snuff-box. 'Hoot man,' said Scott, 'not that old mull. Where's the bonnie French one that I brought you from Paris?' 'Troth, your honour,' replied the old fellow, 'sic a mull as that is nae for week-days.' On leaving the quarry, Scott informed me that, when absent at Paris, he had purchased several trifling articles as presents for his

dependents, and, among others, the gay snuff-box in question, which was so carefully reserved for Sundays by the veteran. 'It was not so much the value of the gifts,' said he, 'that pleased them, as the idea that the laird should think of them when so far away.'"

Scott had written verse as well as prose during his travels. *The Field of Waterloo* was published before the end of October; the profits of the first edition being his contribution to the fund raised for the belief of the widows and children of the soldiers slain in the battle.

Meanwhile the revision of *Paul's Letters* was proceeding; and Scott had almost immediately on his return concluded his bargain for the first edition of a third novel—*The Antiquary*; nor was it much later that he completed rather a tedious negotiation with another bonnet-laird, and added the lands of Kaeside to Abbotsford.

The year 1815 may be considered as, for Scott's peaceful tenor of life, an eventful one. That which followed has left almost its only traces in the successive appearance of nine volumes, which attest the prodigal genius and hardly less astonishing industry of the man. Early in January were published *Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk*, of which I need not now say more than that they were received with lively curiosity, and general, though not vociferous applause. The first edition was an octavo of 6,000 copies; and it was followed in the course of the next two or three years by a second and a third, amounting together to 3,000 more. The popularity of the novelist was at its height; and this admitted, if not avowed, specimen of Scott's prose, must have been perceived by all who had any share of discrimination, to flow from the same pen.

Mr. Terry produced, in the spring of 1816, a dramatic piece entitled *Guy Mannering*, which met with great success on the London boards, and still continues to be a favourite with the theatrical public. What share the novelist himself had in this first specimen of what he used to call the "art of *Terryfying*," I cannot exactly say; but his correspondence shews that the pretty song of the *Lullaby* was not his only contribution to it; and I infer that he had taken the trouble to modify the plot, and rearrange, for stage purposes, a considerable part of the original dialogue.

Early in May appeared the novel of *The Antiquary*, which seems to have been begun a little before the close of 1815. It came out at a moment of domestic distress. His brother, Major

John Scott, whose health had long been feeble, died on May 8th. The Major, from all I have heard, was a sober, sedate bachelor, of dull mind and frugal tastes, who, after his retirement from the army, divided his time between his mother's primitive fireside, and the society of a few whist-playing brother officers, that met for an evening rubber at Fortune's tavern. He left some £6,000 to be divided between his two surviving brothers.

After a little pause of hesitation, it attained popularity not inferior to *Guy Mannering*; and though the author appears for a moment to have shared the doubts which he read in the countenance of James Ballantyne, it certainly was, in the sequel, his chief favourite among all his novels.

It may be worth noting, that it was in correcting the proof-sheets of this novel that Scott first took to equipping his chapters with mottoes of his own fabrication. On one occasion he happened to ask John Ballantyne, who was sitting by him, to hunt for a particular passage in Beaumont and Fletcher. John did as he was bid, but did not succeed in discovering the lines. "Hang it, Johnnie," cried Scott, "I believe I can make a motto sooner than you will find one." He did so accordingly; and from that hour, whenever memory failed to suggest an appropriate epigraph, he had recourse to the inexhaustible mines of "*old play*" or "*old ballad*," to which we owe some of the most exquisite verses that ever flowed from his pen.

Unlike, I believe, most men, whenever Scott neared the end of one composition, his spirit seems to have caught a new spring of buoyancy, and before the last sheet was sent from his desk, he had crowded his brain with the imagination of another fiction. *The Antiquary* was published, as we have seen, in May, but by the beginning of April he had already opened to the Ballantynes the plan of the first *Tales of my Landlord*; and—to say nothing of *Harold the Dauntless*, which he began shortly after *The Bridal of Triermain* was finished, and which he seems to have kept before him for two years as a congenial plaything, to be taken up whenever the coach brought no proof-sheets to jog him as to serious matters—he had also, before this time, undertaken to write the historical department of *The Register* for 1814. He had not yet collected the materials requisite for his historical sketch of a year distinguished for the importance and complexity of its events; but these, he doubted not, would soon reach him, and he felt no hesitation about pledging himself to complete, not only that sketch, but four new volumes of prose romances—and his *Harold the Dauntless* also, if Ballantyne could make any

suitable arrangement on that score—between the April and the Christmas of 1816.

The Antiquary had been published by Constable, but I presume that, in addition to the usual stipulations, he had been again, on that occasion, solicited to relieve John Ballantyne's stock to an extent which he did not find quite convenient; and at all events he had of late shewn a considerable reluctance to employ James Ballantyne and Co. as printers. One or other of these impediments is alluded to in this queer note of Scott's:—"Dear John,—I have seen the great swab, who is supple as a glove, and will do ALL, which some interpret NOTHING. However, we shall do well enough.—W. S." "The great swab" had been admitted, almost from the beginning, into the *secret* of the novels—and for that, among other reasons, it would have been desirable for the novelist to have him continue the publisher without interruption; but Scott was led to suspect, that if he were called upon to conclude a bargain for a fourth novel before the third had made its appearance, his scruples as to the matter of *printing* might at least protract the treaty; and why Scott should have been urgently desirous of seeing the transaction settled at once, is sufficiently explained by the fact, that though so much of Mr. John's old unfortunate stock still remained on hand—and with it some occasional recurrence of difficulty as to *floating-bills* must be expected—while Mr. James Ballantyne's management of pecuniary affairs had not been very careful*—nevertheless, the sanguine author had gone on purchasing one patch of land after another, until his estate had already grown from 150 to nearly 1,000 acres. The property all about his original farm had been in the hands of small holders (*Scotticè, cock-lairds*); these were sharp enough to understand that their neighbour could with difficulty resist any temptation that might present itself in the shape of acres; and thus he proceeded buying up lot after lot of unimproved ground, at extravagant prices,—his "appetite increasing by what it fed on;" while the ejected yeomen set themselves down elsewhere, to fatten at their leisure upon the profits—most commonly the anticipated profits—of "The Scotch Novels."

He was ever and anon pulled up with a momentary misgiving,—and resolved that the latest acquisition should be the last, until he could get rid entirely of "John Ballantyne and Co."

* In February, 1816, when James Ballantyne married, it appears from letters in his handwriting that he owed to Scott more than £3,000 of personal debt.

But, after the first and more serious embarrassments had been overcome, John was far from continuing to hold by his patron's anxiety for the total abolition of their unhappy copartnership. He, unless when some sudden emergency arose, flattered Scott's own gay imagination, by representing everything in the most smiling colours; and though Scott, in his replies, seldom failed to introduce some hint of caution—such as "*Nullum numen abest si sit prudentia*"—he more and more took home to himself the agreeable cast of his *Rigdum's* anticipations, and wrote to him in a vein as merry as his own—e.g. "As for our stock,

"'Twill be wearing awa', John,

Like snaw-wreaths when it's thaw, John," etc. etc. etc.

John could never have forgotten that it was to Constable alone that his firm had more than once owed its escape from dishonour; and he must have known that, after the triumphant career of the *Waverley* series had once commenced, nothing could have been more easy than to bring all the affairs of "back-stock, etc." to a close, by entering into a distinct and candid treaty on that subject, in connexion with the future works of the great novelist, either with Constable or with any other first-rate house in the trade: but he also knew that, were that unhappy firm wholly extinguished, he must himself subside into a clerk of the printing company. Therefore, in a word, he appears to have systematically disguised from Scott the extent to which the whole Ballantyne concern had been sustained by Constable—especially during his Hebridean tour of 1814, and his Continental one of 1815—and prompted and enforced the idea of trying other booksellers from time to time, instead of adhering to Constable, merely for the selfish purposes,—first, of facilitating the immediate discount of bills;—secondly, of further perplexing Scott's affairs, the entire disentanglement of which would have been, as he fancied, prejudicial to his own personal importance.

It was resolved, accordingly, to offer the risk and half-profits of the first edition of another new novel—or rather a collection of novels—to Mr. Murray of Albemarle Street, and Mr. Blackwood, who was then Murray's agent in Scotland; but it was at the same time resolved, partly because Scott wished to try another experiment on the public sagacity, but partly also, no question, from the wish to spare Constable's feelings, that the title-page of the *Tales of my Landlord* should not bear the magical words "by the author of *Waverley*." The facility with

which both Murray and Blackwood embraced such a proposal, as no untried novelist, being sane, could have dreamt of hazarding, shews that neither of them had any doubt as to the identity of the author. They both considered the withholding of the avowal on the forthcoming title-page as likely to check very much the first success of the book ; but they were both eager to prevent Constable's acquiring a sort of prescriptive right to publish for the unrivalled novelist, and agreed to all the terms, including a considerable burden of the endless “back-stock.”

Scott's intention originally was to give in the four volumes as many tales, each having its scene laid in a different province of Scotland ; but this scheme was soon abandoned : and the series included only the two stories of *The Black Dwarf* and *Old Mortality*. When the former had been printed off, Murray shewed it to Gifford, who expressed some disapprobation : and Blackwood, on hearing what *The Quarterly* critic thought, ventured to write to James Ballantyne, intimating his own apprehension likewise, that *The Dwarf* would be considered as hardly worthy of the author : he said that the groundwork was excellent, but that the execution had been too rapid—that the conclusion seemed to him very disappointing : and that if the author would recast the latter chapters, he (Mr. Blackwood) would gladly take on himself the expense of cancelling the sheets. Scott, on receiving this communication, wrote to Ballantyne in terms of violent indignation, of which Blackwood had the sternest share apparently, but which I doubt not was chiefly stirred against the “coadjutor” referred to in the new publisher's epistle. “Tell him and his coadjutor,” said he, “that I belong to the Black Hussars of Literature, who neither give nor receive quarter. I'll be cursed but this is the most impudent proposal that ever was made.” Ballantyne translated this into courtly phrase for the eye of the parties—but Scott heard no more of preliminary criticism.

On December 1st, the *Tales* appeared, and notwithstanding the silence of the title-page, the change of publishers, and the attempt which had certainly been made to vary the style both of delineation and of language, all doubts whether they were or were not from the same hand with *Waverley* had worn themselves out before the lapse of a week. On the 14th, the London publisher was unable to suppress his exultation, and addressed to Scott himself a letter concluding in these words : “Heber says there are only two men in the world—Walter Scott and Lord Byron. Between you, you have

given existence to a THIRD—ever your faithful servant, JOHN MURRAY.”

Within less than a month, *The Black Dwarf* and *Old Mortality* were followed by *Harold the Dauntless*, by the author of *The Bridal of Triermain*. This poem had been, it appears, begun several years back; nay, part of it had been actually printed before the appearance of *Childe Harold*, though that circumstance had escaped the author's remembrance when he penned, in 1830, his Introduction to *The Lord of the Isles*; for he there says, “I am still astonished at my having committed the gross error of selecting the very name which Lord Byron had made so famous.” The volume was published by Messrs. Constable, and had, in those booksellers' phrase, “considerable success.” It has never, however, been placed on a level with *Triermain*; and though it contains many vigorous pictures, and splendid verses, and here and there some happy humour, the confusion and harsh transitions of the fable, and the dim rudeness of character and manners, seem sufficient to account for this inferiority in public favour. It is not surprising that the author should have redoubled his aversion to the notion of any more serious performances in verse. He had seized on an instrument of wider compass, and which, handled with whatever rapidity, seemed to reveal at every touch treasures that had hitherto slept unconsciously within him. He had thrown off his fetters, and might well go forth rejoicing in the native elasticity of his strength.

It is at least a curious coincidence in literary history, that as Cervantes, driven from the stage of Madrid by the success of Lope de Vega, threw himself into prose romance, and produced, at the moment when the world considered him as silent for ever, the *Don Quixote* which has outlived Lope's two thousand triumphant dramas—so Scott, abandoning verse to Byron, should have rebounded from his fall by the only prose romances, which seem to be classed with the masterpiece of Spanish genius, by the general judgment of Europe.

CHAPTER IX

Serious illness—Laidlaw settled at Kaeside and the Fergussons at Huntley Burn—New House begun—Washington Irving—Publication of *Rob Roy* and *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*—Scott in Edinburgh. 1817-1818.

NOR to disturb the narrative of his literary proceedings, I have deferred until now the mention of an attempt which Scott made during the winter of 1816-1817, to exchange his seat at the Clerk's table for one on the Bench of the Scotch Court of Exchequer. It had often occurred to me, in the most prosperous years of his life, that such a situation would have suited him better in every respect than that which he held, and that his never attaining a promotion, which the Scottish public would have considered so naturally due to his character and services, reflected little honour on his political allies. But at the period when I was entitled to hint this to him, he appeared to have made up his mind that the rank of Clerk of Session was more compatible than that of a Supreme Judge with the habits of a literary man, who was perpetually publishing, and whose writings were generally of the imaginative order. I had also witnessed the zeal with which he seconded the views of more than one of his own friends, when their ambition was directed to the Exchequer Bench. I remained, in short, ignorant that he ever had seriously thought of it for himself, until the ruin of his worldly fortunes in 1826; nor had I any information that his wish to obtain it had ever been distinctly stated, until his letters to the late Duke of Buccleuch were placed in my hands after his death. The Duke's answers shew the warmest anxiety to serve Scott, but refer to private matters, which rendered it inconsistent with his Grace's feelings to interfere at the time with the distribution of Crown patronage. I incline to think, on the whole, that the death of this nobleman, which soon after left the influence of his house in abeyance, must have, far more than any other circumstance, determined Scott to renounce all notions of altering his professional position.

Early in 1817, he was visited, for the first time since his childish years, with a painful illness, which proved the harbinger of a series of attacks, all nearly of the same kind, continued at short intervals during more than two years. The reader has

been told already how widely his habits of life when in Edinburgh differed from those of Abbotsford. They at all times did so to a great extent ; but he had pushed his liberties with a most robust constitution to a perilous extreme while the affairs of the Ballantynes were labouring.

His friends in Edinburgh continued all that spring in great anxiety on his account. Scarcely, however, had the first symptoms yielded to severe medical treatment, than he is found to have beguiled the intervals of his suffering by planning a drama on a story supplied to him by one of Train's communications, which he desired to present to Terry, on behalf of the actor's first-born son, who had been christened by the name of Walter Scott Terry. Such was the origin of *The Fortunes of De-vorgoil*—a piece which, though completed soon afterwards, and submitted by Terry to many manipulations with a view to the stage, was never received by any manager, and was first published, towards the close of the author's life, under the title, slightly altered for an obvious reason, of *The Doom of De-vorgoil*.

Shortly before this time, Mr. William Laidlaw had met with misfortunes, which rendered it necessary for him to give up his farm. He was now anxiously looking about him for some new establishment, and Scott invited him to occupy a house on his property, and endeavour, under his guidance, to make such literary exertions as might improve his income. The prospect of obtaining such a neighbour was, no doubt, the more welcome to "Abbotsford and Kaeside," from its opening at this period of fluctuating health ; and Laidlaw, who had for twenty years loved and revered him, considered the proposal with far greater delight than the most lucrative appointment on any noble domain in the island could have afforded him. Though possessed of a lively and searching sagacity as to things in general, he had always been as to his own worldly interests simple as a child.

Neither the recurring fits of cramp, nor anything else, could as yet interrupt Scott's literary industry. Before Whitsuntide he had made his bargain for another novel. This was at once tendered to Constable, who was delighted to interrupt in his turn the connexion with Murray and Blackwood, and readily agreed to meet John Ballantyne at Abbotsford, where all was speedily settled.

As to *Rob Roy*, the title was suggested by Constable, and he told me years afterwards the difficulty he had to get it adopted by the author. "What !" said he, "Mr. Accoucheur, must

you be setting up for Mr. Sponsor too?—but let's hear it." Constable said the name of the real hero would be the best possible name for the book. "Nay," answered Scott, "never let me have to write up to a name. You well know I have generally adopted a title that told nothing." The bookseller, however, persevered; and after the trio had dined, these scruples gave way.

By this time, the foundations of that part of the existing house of Abbotsford, which extends from the hall westwards to the original courtyard, had been laid: and Scott, on reaching home, found a new source of constant occupation in watching the proceedings of his masons. He had, moreover, no lack of employment further a-field,—for he was now negotiating with another neighbouring landowner for the purchase of an addition of more consequence than any he had hitherto made to his estate. In the course of the autumn he concluded this matter, and became, for the price of £10,000, proprietor of the lands of Toftfield, on which there had recently been erected a substantial mansion-house. This circumstance offered a temptation which much quickened Scott's zeal for completing his arrangement. The venerable Professor Fergusson had died a year before; his son Adam had been placed on half-pay; and Scott now saw the means of securing for himself, henceforth, the immediate neighbourhood of the companion of his youth, and his amiable sisters. Fergusson, who had written from the lines of Torres Vedras his hopes of finding, when the war should be over, some sheltering cottage upon the Tweed, within a walk of Abbotsford, was delighted to see his dreams realised; and the family took up their residence next spring at the new house of Toftfield, on which Scott then bestowed, at the ladies' request, the name of Huntley Burn: this more harmonious designation being taken from the mountain brook which passes through its garden—the same famous in tradition as the scene of Thomas the Rhymer's interviews with the Queen of Fairy. The upper part of the Rhymer's Glen, through which this brook finds its way from the Cauldsheilds Loch to Toftfield, had been included in a previous purchase. He was now master of all these haunts of "True Thomas," and of the whole ground of the battle of Melrose, from Skirmish-field to Turn-again. His enjoyment of the new territory was, however, interrupted by various returns of his cramp, and the depression of spirit which always attended, in his case, the use of opium, the only medicine that seemed to have power over the disease.

A pleasant incident belongs to August, 1817. Scott had read *The History of New York by Knickerbocker*, shortly after its appearance in 1812; and the admirable humour of this early work had led him to anticipate the brilliant career which its author has since run. Campbell, being no stranger to Scott's estimation of Washington Irving's genius, gave him a letter of introduction, which, halting his chaise on the high-road above Abbotsford, he modestly sent down to the house "with a card on which he had written, that he was on his way to the ruins of Melrose, and wished to know whether it would be agreeable to Mr. Scott to receive a visit from him in the course of the morning."

"The noise of my chaise," says Irving, "had disturbed the quiet of the establishment. Out sallied the warder of the castle, a black greyhound, and leaping on one of the blocks of stone, began a furious barking. This alarm brought out the whole garrison of dogs, all open-mouthed and vociferous. In a little while the lord of the castle himself made his appearance. I knew him at once, by the likenesses that had been published of him. He came limping up the gravel walk, aiding himself by a stout walking-staff, but moving rapidly and with vigour. By his side jogged along a large iron-grey staghound, of most grave demeanour, who took no part in the clamour of the canine rabble, but seemed to consider himself bound, for the dignity of the house, to give me a courteous reception. Before Scott reached the gate, he called out in a hearty tone, welcoming me to Abbotsford, and asking news of Campbell. Arrived at the door of the chaise, he grasped me warmly by the hand: 'Come, drive down, drive down to the house,' said he, 'ye're just in time for breakfast, and afterwards ye shall see all the wonders of the Abbey.'"

These lines to the elder Ballantyne are without date. They accompanied, no doubt, the last proof-sheet of *Rob Roy*, and were therefore in all probability written about ten days before December 31st, 1817—on which day the novel was published.

"With great joy
I send you *Roy*.
'Twas a tough job,
But we're done with *Rob*."

The novel had indeed been "a tough job"—for lightly and airily as it reads, the author had struggled almost throughout with the pains of cramp or the lassitude of opium. Calling

on him one day to dun him for copy, James found him with a clean pen and a blank sheet before him, and uttered some rather solemn exclamation of surprise. "Ay, ay, Jemmy," said he, "'tis easy for you to bid me get on, but how the deuce can I make Rob Roy's wife speak, with such a *curmurring* in my guts?"

Rob and his wife, Baillie Jarvie and his housekeeper, Di Vernon and Rashleigh Osbaldistone—these boldly drawn and happily contrasted personages—were welcomed as warmly as the most fortunate of their predecessors. Constable's resolution to begin with an edition of 10,000, proved to have been as sagacious as brave; for within a fortnight a second 3,000 was called for.

Scott, however, had not waited for this new burst of applause. As soon as he came within view of the completion of *Rob Roy*, he desired John Ballantyne to propose to Constable a second series of the *Tales of my Landlord*, to be comprised, like the first, in four volumes, and ready for publication by "the King's birthday;" that is, June 4th, 1818. "I have hungered and thirsted," he wrote, "to see the end of those shabby borrowings among friends; they have all been wiped out except the good Duke's £4,000—and I will not suffer either new offers of land or anything else to come in the way of that clearance. I expect that you will be able to arrange this resurrection of Jedediah, so that £5,000 shall be at my order."

The time now approached when a Commission to examine the Crown-room in the Castle of Edinburgh, which had sprung from one of Scott's conversations with the Prince Regent in 1815, was at length to be acted upon; and the result was the discovery of the long lost regalia of Scotland. Of the official proceedings of February 4th, 1818, the reader has a full and particular account in an Essay which Scott penned shortly afterwards; but I may add a little incident of the 5th. He and several of his brother Commissioners then revisited the Castle, accompanied by some of the ladies of their families.

At this moment, his position, take it for all in all, was, I am inclined to believe, what no other man had ever won for himself by the pen alone. His works were the daily food, not only of his countrymen, but of all educated Europe. His society was courted by whatever England could shew of eminence. Station, power, wealth, beauty, and genius, strove with each other in every demonstration of respect and worship, and—a few political fanatics and envious poetasters apart—wherever

he appeared in town or country, whoever had Scotch blood in him, "gentle or simple," felt it move more rapidly through his veins when he was in the presence of Scott. To descend to what many looked on as higher things, he considered himself, and was considered by all about him, as rapidly consolidating a large fortune :—the annual profits of his novels alone had, for several years, been not less than £10,000 ; his domains were daily increased—his castle was rising—and perhaps few doubted that ere long he might receive from the just favour of his Prince some distinction in the way of external rank, such as had seldom before been dreamt of as the possible consequences of a mere literary celebrity. It was about this time that the compiler of these pages first had the opportunity of observing the plain, easy modesty which had survived the many temptations of such a career ; and the kindness of heart pervading, in all circumstances, his gentle deportment, which made him the rare, perhaps the solitary, example of a man signally elevated from humble beginnings, and loved more and more by his earliest friends and connexions, in proportion as he had fixed on himself the homage of the great and the wonder of the world.

It was during the sitting of the General Assembly of the Kirk in May, 1818, that I first had the honour of meeting him in private society : the party was not a large one, at the house of a much-valued common friend—Mr. Home Drummond, the grandson of Lord Kames. Mr. Scott, ever apt to consider too favourably the literary efforts of others, and more especially of very young persons, received me, when I was presented to him, with a cordiality which I had not been prepared to expect from one filling a station so exalted.

He at this time occupied as his *den* a small square room, behind the dining parlour in Castle Street. It had but a single Venetian window, opening on a patch of turf not much larger than itself, and the aspect of the place was on the whole sombrous. The walls were entirely clothed with books ; most of them folios and quartos, and all in that complete state of repair which at a glance reveals a tinge of bibliomania. A dozen volumes or so, needful for immediate purposes of reference, were placed close by him on a small movable frame—something like a dumb-waiter. All the rest were in their proper niches, and wherever a volume had been lent, its room was occupied by a wooden block of the same size, having a card with the name of the borrower and date of the loan tacked on its front. The old bindings had obviously been retouched and regilt

in the most approved manner ; the new, when the books were of any mark, were rich, but never gaudy—a large proportion of blue morocco—all stamped with his device of the portcullis, and its motto, *clausus tutus ero*—being an anagram of his name in Latin. Every case and shelf was accurately lettered, and the works arranged systematically ; history and biography on one side—poetry and the drama on another—law books and dictionaries behind his own chair. The only table was a massive piece of furniture which he had constructed on the model of one at Rokeby ; with a desk and all its appurtenances on either side, that an amanuensis might work opposite to him when he chose ; and with small tiers of drawers, reaching all round to the floor. The top displayed a goodly array of session papers, and on the desk below were, besides the MS. at which he was working, sundry parcels of letters, proof-sheets, and so forth, all neatly done up with red tape. His own writing apparatus was a very handsome old box, richly carved, lined with crimson velvet, and containing ink-bottles, taper-stand, etc. in silver—the whole in such order that it might have come from the silversmith's window half an hour before. Besides his own huge elbow-chair, there were but two others in the room, and one of these seemed, from its position, to be reserved exclusively for the amanuensis. I observed, during the first evening I spent with him in this *sanctum*, that while he talked, his hands were hardly ever idle ; sometimes he folded letter-covers—sometimes he twisted paper into matches, performing both tasks with great mechanical expertness and nicety ; and when there was no loose paper fit to be so dealt with, he snapped his fingers, and the noble Maida aroused himself from his lair on the hearth-rug, and laid his head across his master's knees, to be caressed and fondled. The room had no space for pictures except one, a portrait of Claverhouse, which hung over the chimneypiece, with a Highland target on either side, and broadswords and dirks (each having its own story) disposed star-fashion round them. A few green tin boxes, such as solicitors keep title-deeds in, were piled over each other on one side of the window ; and on the top of these lay a fox's tail, mounted on an antique silver handle, wherewith, as often as he had occasion to take down a book, he gently brushed the dust off the upper leaves before opening it. I think I have mentioned all the furniture of the room except a sort of ladder, low, broad, well carpeted, and strongly guarded with oaken rails, by which he helped himself to books from his higher

shelves. On the top step of this convenience, Hinse of Hinsfeldt (so called from one of the German *Kinder-märchen*), a venerable tom-cat, fat and sleek, and no longer very locomotive, usually lay watching the proceedings of his master and Maida with an air of dignified equanimity ; but when Maida chose to leave the party, he signified his inclinations by thumping the door with his huge paw, as violently as ever a fashionable footman handled a knocker in Grosvenor Square ; the Sheriff rose and opened it for him with courteous alacrity,—and then Hinse came down purring from his perch, and mounted guard by the footstool, *vice* Maida absent upon furlough. Whatever discourse might be passing, was broken every now and then by some affectionate apostrophe to these four-footed friends. He said they understood everything he said to them—and I believe they did understand a great deal of it. But at all events, dogs and cats, like children, have some infallible tact for discovering at once who is, and who is not, really fond of their company ; and I venture to say, Scott was never five minutes in any room before the little pets of the family, whether dumb or lisping, had found out his kindness for all their generation.

It was impossible to listen to Scott's oral narrations, whether gay or serious, or to the felicitous fun with which he parried absurdities of all sorts, without discovering better qualities in his talk than *wit*—and of a higher order ; I mean especially a power of *vivid painting*—the true and primary sense of what is called *imagination*. He was like Jacques—though not a “Melancholy Jacques ;” and “moralised” a common topic “into a thousand similitudes.” Shakspeare and the banished Duke would have found him “full of matter.” He disliked mere disquisitions in Edinburgh, and prepared *impromptus* in London ; and puzzled the promoters of such things sometimes by placid silence, sometimes by broad merriment. To such men he seemed *commonplace*—not so to the most dexterous masters in what was to some of them almost a science ; not so to Rose, Hallam, Moore, or Rogers,—to Ellis, Mackintosh, Croker, or Canning.

It is a fact, which some philosophers may think worth setting down, that Scott's organisation, as to more than one of the senses, was the reverse of exquisite. He had very little of what musicians call an ear ; his smell was hardly more delicate. I have seen him stare about, quite unconscious of the cause, when his whole company betrayed their uneasiness at the approach of an over-kept haunch of venison ; and neither by

the nose nor the palate could he distinguish corked wine from sound. He could never tell Madeira from sherry; nay, an Oriental friend having sent him a butt of *sheeraz*, when he remembered the circumstance some time afterwards, and called for a bottle to have Sir John Malcolm's opinion of its quality, it turned out that his butler, mistaking the label, had already served up half the bin as *sherry*. Port he considered as physic: he never willingly swallowed more than one glass of it, and was sure to anathematise a second, if offered, by repeating John Home's epigram—

"Bold and erect the Caledonian stood,
Old was his mutton, and his claret good;
'Let him drink port,' the English statesman cried—
He drank the poison, and his spirit died."

In truth, he liked no wines except sparkling champagne and claret; but even as to this last he was no connoisseur; and sincerely preferred a tumbler of whisky-toddy to the most precious "liquid ruby" that ever flowed in the cup of a prince. He rarely took any other potation when quite alone with his family; but at the Sunday board he circulated the champagne briskly during dinner, and considered a pint of claret each man's fair share afterwards. I should not omit, however, that his Bourdeaux was uniformly preceded by a small libation of the genuine *mountain dew*, which he poured with his own hand, *more majorum*, for each guest—making use for the purpose of such a multifarious collection of ancient Highland *quaighs* (little cups of curiously dovetailed wood, inlaid with silver) as no Lowland sideboard but his was ever equipped with—but commonly reserving for himself one that was peculiarly precious in his eyes, as having travelled from Edinburgh to Derby in the canteen of Prince Charlie. This relic had been presented to "the wandering Ascanius" by some very careful follower, for its bottom is of glass, that he who quaffed might keep his eye the while upon the dirk hand of his companion.

Let me turn, meanwhile, to a table very different from his own, at which, from this time forward, I often met Scott.

James Ballantyne then lived in St. John Street, a row of good, old-fashioned, and spacious houses, adjoining the Canon-gate and Holyrood, and at no great distance from his printing establishment. He had married a few years before the daughter of a wealthy farmer in Berwickshire—a quiet amiable woman, of simple manners, and perfectly domestic habits: a group of

fine young children were growing up about him ; and he usually, if not constantly, had under his roof his aged mother, his and his wife's tender care of whom it was most pleasing to witness. As far as a stranger might judge, there could not be a more exemplary household, or a happier one ; and I have occasionally met the poet in St. John Street when there were no other guests but Erskine, Terry, George Hogarth, and another intimate friend or two, and when James Ballantyne was content to appear in his own true and best colours, the kind head of his family, the respectful but honest schoolfellow of Scott, the easy landlord of a plain, comfortable table. But when any great event was about to take place in the business, especially on the eve of a new novel, there were doings of a higher strain in St. John Street ; and to be present at one of those scenes was truly a rich treat, even—if not especially—for persons who, like myself, had no more *knowledge* than the rest of the world as to the authorship of *Waverley*. Then were congregated about the printer all his own literary allies, of whom a considerable number were by no means personally familiar with "THE GREAT UNKNOWN :"—who, by the way, owed to him that widely adopted title ;—and He appeared among the rest with his usual open aspect of buoyant good-humour—although it was not difficult to trace, in the occasional play of his features, the diversion it afforded him to watch all the procedure of his swelling confidant, and the curious neophytes that surrounded the well-spread board.

The feast was, to use one of James's own favourite epithets, *gorgeous* ; an aldermanic display of turtle and venison, with the suitable accompaniments of iced punch, potent ale, and generous Madeira. When the cloth was drawn, the burly preses arose, with all he could muster of the port of John Kemble, and spouted with a sonorous voice the formula of Macbeth—

"Fill full !

I drink to the general joy of the whole table !"

This was followed by "The King, God bless him !" and second came—"Gentlemen, there is another toast which never has been nor shall be omitted in this house of mine—I give you the health of Mr. Walter Scott with three times three !"—All honour having been done to this health, and Scott having briefly thanked the company with some expressions of warm affection to their host, Mrs. Ballantyne retired ;—the bottles passed round twice or thrice in the usual way ;—and then James rose

once more, every vein on his brow distended, his eyes solemnly fixed upon vacancy, to propose, not as before in his stentorian key, but with "bated breath," in the sort of whisper by which a stage conspirator thrills the gallery—"Gentlemen, a bumper to the immortal Author of '*Waverley*'!"—The uproar of cheering, in which Scott made a fashion of joining, was succeeded by deep silence, and then Ballantyne proceeded—

"In his Lord-Burleigh look, serene and serious,
A something of imposing and mysterious"—

to lament the obscurity in which his illustrious but too modest correspondent still chose to conceal himself from the plaudits of the world—to thank the company for the manner in which the *nominis umbra* had been received—and to assure them that the Author of *Waverley* would, when informed of the circumstance, feel highly delighted—"the proudest hour of his life," etc., etc. The cool demure fun of Scott's features during all this mummary was perfect; and Erskine's attempt at a gay *nonchalance* was still more ludicrously meritorious. Aldiborontiphoscophornio, however, bursting as he was, knew too well to allow the new novel to be made the subject of discussion. Its name was announced, and success to it crowned another cup; but after that, no more of Jedediah. To cut the thread, he rolled out unbidden some one of his many theatrical songs, in a style that would have done no dishonour to almost any orchestra—*The Maid of Lodi*—or perhaps, *The Bay of Biscay*, oh!—or *The sweet little cherub that sits up aloft*. Other toasts followed, interspersed with ditties from other performers;—old George Thomson, the friend of Burns, was ready, for one, with *The Moorland Wedding*, or *Willie brew'd a peck o' maut*;—and so it went on, until Scott and Erskine, with any clerical or very staid personage that had chanced to be admitted, saw fit to withdraw. Then the scene was changed. The claret and olives made way for broiled bones and a mighty bowl of punch; and when a few glasses of the hot beverage had restored his powers, James opened *ore rotundo* on the merits of the forthcoming romance. "One chapter—one chapter only"—was the cry. After "*Nay, by'r Lady, nay!*" and a few more coy shifts, the proof-sheets were at length produced, and James, with many a prefatory hem, read aloud what he considered as the most striking dialogue they contained.

The first I heard so read was the interview between Jeanie Deans, the Duke of Argyle, and Queen Caroline, in Richmond

Park ; and notwithstanding some spice of the pompous tricks to which he was addicted, I must say he did the inimitable scene great justice. At all events, the effect it produced was deep and memorable, and no wonder that the exalting typographer's *one bumper more to Jedediah Cleishbotham* preceded his parting stave, which was uniformly *The Last Words of Marmion*, executed certainly with no contemptible rivalry of Braham.

Why did Scott persist in mixing up all his most important concerns with these Ballantynes ? The reader of these pages will have all my materials for an answer ; but in the meantime let it suffice to say, that he was the most patient, long-suffering, affectionate, and charitable of mankind ; that in the case of both the brothers he could count, after all, on a sincerely, nay, a passionately devoted attachment to his person ; that, with the greatest of human beings, use is in all but unconquerable power ; and that he who so loftily tossed aside the seemingly most dangerous assaults of flattery, the blandishment of dames, the condescension of princes, the enthusiasm of crowds—had still his weak point, upon which two or three humble besiegers, and one unwearied, though most frivolous underminer, well knew how to direct their approaches. It was a favourite saw of his own, that the wisest of our race often reserve the average stock of folly to be all expended upon some one flagrant absurdity.

I alluded to James Ballantyne's reading of the famous scene in Richmond Park. According to Scott's original intention, the second series of *Jedediah* was to have included two tales ; but his Jeanie Deans soon grew so on his fancy as to make this impossible ; and *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* alone occupied the four volumes which appeared in June, 1818, and were at once placed by acclamation in the foremost rank of his writings. Lady Louisa Stuart's picture of the southern rapture may be found elsewhere ; but I must not omit here her own remarks on the principal character : " People were beginning to say the author would wear himself out ; it was going on too long in the same key, and no striking notes could possibly be produced. On the contrary, I think the interest is stronger here than in any of the former ones—(always excepting my first-love *Waverley*)—and one may congratulate you upon having effected what many have tried to do, and nobody yet succeeded in, making the perfectly good character the most interesting. Of late days, especially since it has been the fashion to write moral and even religious novels, one might almost say of

some of the wise good heroines, what a lively girl once said of her well-meaning aunt—‘Upon my word she is enough to make anybody wicked.’ And though beauty and talents are heaped on the right side, the writer, in spite of himself, is sure to put agreeableness on the wrong; the person from whose errors he means you should take warning, runs away with your secret partiality in the meantime. Had this very story been conducted by a common hand, Effie would have attracted our concern and sympathy—Jeanie only cold approbation. Whereas Jeanie, without youth, beauty, genius, warm passions, or any other novel-perfection, is here our object from beginning to end. This is ‘enlisting the affections in the cause of virtue’ ten times more than ever Richardson did; for whose male and female pedants, all excelling as they are, I never could care half so much as I found myself inclined to do for Jeanie before I finished the first volume.”

From the choice of localities, and the splendid blazoning of tragical circumstances that had left the strongest impression on the memory and imagination of every inhabitant, the reception of this tale in Edinburgh was a scene of all-engrossing enthusiasm, such as I never witnessed there on the appearance of any other literary novelty. But the admiration and delight were the same all over Scotland. Never before had he seized such really noble features of the national character as were canonised in the person of his homely heroine: no art had ever devised a happier running contrast than that of her and her sister, or interwoven a portraiture of lowly manners and simple virtues, with more graceful delineations of polished life, or with bolder shadows of terror, guilt, crime, remorse, madness, and all the agony of the passions.

CHAPTER X

Sketches of Abbotsford—Illness and Domestic Afflictions—*The Bride of Lammermoor*—*The Legend of Montrose*—*Ivanhoe*. 1818-1819.

THE 12th of July [1818] restored Scott as usual to the supervision of his trees and carpenters; but he had already told the Ballantynes, that the story which he had found it impossible to include in the recent series should be forthwith taken up as the opening one of a third; and instructed John

to embrace the first favourable opportunity of offering Constable the publication of this, on the footing of 10,000 copies again forming the first edition; but now at length without any more stipulations connected with the "old stock."

One of his visitors of September was Mr. R. Cadell, who was now in all the secrets of his father-in-law and partner Constable; and observing how his host was harassed with lion-hunters, and what a number of hours he spent daily in the company of his work-people, he expressed, during one of their walks, his wonder that Scott should ever be able to write books at all while in the country. "I know," he said, "that you contrive to get a few hours in your own room, and that may do for the mere pen-work; but when is it that you think?"—"Oh," said Scott, "I lie *simmering* over things for an hour or so before I get up—and there's the time I am dressing to overhaul my half-sleeping, half-waking, *projet de chapitre*—and when I get the paper before me, it commonly runs off pretty easily. Besides, I often take a dose in the plantations, and while Tom marks out a dyke or a drain, as I have directed, one's fancy may be running its ain riggs in some other world."

It was in the month following that I first saw Abbotsford. He invited my friend John Wilson (now Professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh) and myself to visit him for a day or two on our return from an excursion to Mr. Wilson's beautiful villa on Windermere, but named the particular day (October 8th) on which it would be most convenient for him to receive us; and we discovered on our arrival, that he had fixed it from a good-natured motive. We found him walking at no great distance from the house, with five or six young people, and his friends Lord Melville and Adam Fergusson. Having presented us to the First Lord of the Admiralty, he fell back a little and said, "I am glad you came to-day, for I thought it might be of use to you both, some time or other, to be known to my old school-fellow here, who is, and I hope will long continue to be, the great giver of good things in the Parliament House. I trust you have had enough of certain pranks with your friend Ebony, and if so, Lord Melville will have too much sense to remember them."

Before breakfast next day was over the post-bag arrived, and its contents were so numerous, that Lord Melville asked Scott what election was on hand—not doubting that there must be some very particular reason for such a shoal of letters. He answered that it was much the same most days, and added,

"though no one has kinder friends in the franking line, and though Freeling and Croker especially are always ready to stretch the point of privilege in my favour, I am nevertheless a fair contributor to the revenue, for I think my bill for letters seldom comes under £150 a-year; and as to coach-parcels, they are a perfect ruination." He then told with high merriment a disaster that had lately befallen him. "One morning last spring," he said, "I opened a huge lump of a despatch, without looking how it was addressed, never doubting that it had travelled under some omnipotent frank like the First Lord of the Admiralty's, when, lo and behold, the contents proved to be a MS. play, by a young lady of New York, who kindly requested me to read and correct it, equip it with prologue and epilogue, procure for it a favourable reception from the manager of Drury Lane, and make Murray or Constable bleed handsomely for the copyright; and on inspecting the cover, I found that I had been charged five pounds odd for the postage. This was bad enough, but there was no help, so I groaned and submitted. A fortnight or so after, another packet, of not less formidable bulk, arrived, and I was absent enough to break its seal too without examination. Conceive my horror when out jumped the same identical tragedy of *The Cherokee Lovers*, with a second epistle from the authoress, stating that, as the winds had been boisterous, she feared the vessel intrusted with her former communication might have foundered, and therefore judged it prudent to forward a duplicate."

Scott shewed us the ruins of Melrose in detail; and as we proceeded to Dryburgh, descanted learnedly and sagaciously on the good effects which must have attended the erection of so many great monastic establishments in a district so peculiarly exposed to the inroads of the English in the days of the Border wars. "They were now and then violated," he said, "as their aspect to this hour bears witness; but for once that they suffered, any lay property similarly situated must have been *harried* a dozen times. The bold Dacres, Liddells, and Howards, that could get easy absolution at York or Durham for any ordinary breach of a truce with the Scots, would have had to *dree a heavy dole* had they confessed plundering from the fat brothers, or the same order perhaps, whose lines had fallen to them on the wrong side of the Cheviot." He enlarged too on the heavy penalty which the Crown of Scotland had paid for its rash acquiescence in the wholesale robbery of the Church at the Reformation.

At Dryburgh Scott pointed out to us the sepulchral aisle of his Haliburton ancestors, and said he hoped, in God's appointed time, to lay his bones among their dust. The spot was, even then, a sufficiently interesting and impressive one ; but I shall not say more of it at present.

Towards the end of this year Scott received from Lord Sidmouth the formal announcement of the Prince Regent's desire (which had been privately communicated some months earlier through the Lord Chief-Commissioner Adam) to confer on him the rank of Baronet. When he first heard of the Regent's intention, he signified considerable hesitation ; for it had not escaped his observation that such airy sounds, however modestly people may be disposed to estimate them, are apt to entail in the upshot additional cost upon their way of living, and to affect accordingly the plastic fancies, feelings, and habits of their children. But Lord Sidmouth's letter happened to reach him a few months after he had heard of the sudden death of Charles Carpenter, who had bequeathed the reversion of his fortune to his sister's family ; and this circumstance disposed Scott to waive his scruples, chiefly with a view to the professional advantage of his eldest son, who had by this time fixed on the life of a soldier.

His health prevented him from going up to the fountain of honour for more than a year. Meantime his building and other operations continued to tax his resources more than he had calculated upon ; and he now completed an important negotiation with Constable, who agreed to give him bonds for £12,000 in consideration of all his existing copyrights ; namely, whatever shares had been reserved to him in the earlier poems, and the whole property in his novels down to the third series of *Tales of my Landlord* inclusive. The deed included a clause by which Constable was to forfeit £2,000 if he ever "divulged the name of the Author of *Waverley* during the life of the said Walter Scott, Esq." It is perhaps hardly worth mentioning, that about this date a London bookseller announced certain volumes of Grub Street manufacture, as "A New Series of the *Tales of my Landlord* ;" and when John Ballantyne, as the "agent for the author of *Waverley*," published a declaration that the volumes thus advertised were not from that writer's pen, met John's declaration by an audacious rejoinder—impeaching his authority, and asserting that nothing but the appearance in the field of the gentleman for whom Ballantyne pretended to act, could shake his belief that he was himself in the confidence of the true

Simon Pure. Hereupon the dropping of Scott's mask seems to have been pronounced advisable by both Ballantyne and Constable. But he calmly replied, "The Author who lends himself to such a trick must be a blockhead—let them publish, and that will serve our purpose better than anything we ourselves could do." I have forgotten the names of the "tales," which, being published accordingly, fell still-born from the press.

During the winter he appears to have made little progress with the third series included in this negotiation ;—his painful seizures of cramp were again recurring frequently, and he probably thought it better to allow the novels to lie over until his health should be re-established. In the meantime he drew up a set of topographical and historical essays, which originally appeared in the successive numbers of the splendidly illustrated work, entitled *Provincial Antiquities of Scotland*.* But he did this merely to gratify his own love of the subject, and because, well or ill, he must be doing something. He declined all pecuniary recompense ; but afterwards, when the success of the publication was secure, accepted from the proprietors some of the beautiful drawings by Turner, Thomson, and other artists, which had been prepared to accompany his text. He also wrote that winter his article on the Drama for the *Encyclopædia Supplement*, and the reviewal of the fourth canto of *Childe Harold* for the *Quarterly*.

On February 15th, 1819, he witnessed the first representation, on the Edinburgh boards, of the most meritorious and successful of all the *Terryfications*, though Terry himself was not the manufacturer. The drama of *Rob Roy* will never again be got up so well in all its parts, as it then was by William Murray's Company ; the manager's own Captain Thornton was excellent—and so was the Dugald Creature of a Mr. Duff—there was also a good "Mattie"—(about whose equipment, by-the-by, Scott felt such interest that he left his box between the acts to remind Mr. Murray that she "must have a mantle with her lanthorn ;")—but the great and unrivalled attraction was the personification of Bailie Jarvie, by Charles Mackay, who, being himself a native of Glasgow, entered into the minutest peculiarities of the character with high *gusto*, and gave the west-country dialect its most racy perfection. It was extremely diverting to watch the play of Scott's features during this admirable reali-

* These charming essays are now included in his *Miscellaneous Prose Works*.

sation of his conception; and I must add, that the behaviour of the Edinburgh audience on all such occasions, while the secret of the novels was preserved, reflected great honour on their good taste and delicacy of feeling. He seldom, in those days, entered his box without receiving some mark of general respect and admiration; but I never heard of any pretext being laid hold of to connect these demonstrations with the piece he had come to witness, or, in short, to do or say anything likely to interrupt his quiet enjoyment of the evening in the midst of his family and friends.

This *Rob Roy* had a continued run of forty-one nights; and when the Bailie's benefit-night arrived, he received an epistle of kind congratulation signed *Jedediah Cleishbotham*, and enclosing a five-pound note: but all the while, Scott was in a miserable state, and when he left Edinburgh, in March, the alarm about him in the Parliament House was very serious. He had invited me to visit him in the country during the recess; but I should not have ventured to keep my promise, had not the Ballantynes reported amendment towards the close of April. John then told me that his "illustrious friend" (for so both the brothers usually spoke of him) was so much recovered as to have resumed his usual literary tasks, though with this difference, that he now, for the first time in his life, found it necessary to employ the hand of another.

He had now begun in earnest his *Bride of Lammermoor*, and his amanuenses were William Laidlaw and John Ballantyne;—of whom he preferred the latter, when he could be at Abbotsford, on account of the superior rapidity of his pen; and also because John kept his pen to the paper without interruption, and, though with many an arch twinkle in his eyes, and now and then an audible smack of his lips, had resolution to work on like a well-trained clerk; whereas good Laidlaw entered with such keen zest into the interest of the story as it flowed from the author's lips, that he could not suppress exclamations of surprise and delight—"Gude keep us a'!—the like o' that!—eh sirs! eh sirs!"—and so forth—which did not promote despatch. I have often, however, in the sequel, heard both these secretaries describe the astonishment with which they were equally affected when Scott began this experiment: the affectionate Laidlaw beseeching him to stop dictating, when his audible suffering filled every pause, "Nay, Willie," he answered, "only see that the doors are fast. I would fain keep all the cry as well as all the wool to ourselves; but as to giving over

work, that can only be when I am in woollen." John Ballantyne told me, that after the first day, he always took care to have a dozen of pens made before he seated himself opposite to the sofa on which Scott lay, and that though he often turned himself on his pillow with a groan of torment, he usually continued the sentence in the same breath. But when dialogue of peculiar animation was in progress, spirit seemed to triumph altogether over matter—he arose from his couch and walked up and down the room, raising and lowering his voice, and as it were acting the parts. It was in this fashion that Scott produced the far greater portion of *The Bride of Lammermoor*—the whole of *The Legend of Montrose*—and almost the whole of *Ivanhoe*. Yet when his health was fairly re-established, he disdained to avail himself of the power of dictation, which he had thus put to the sharpest test, but resumed, and for many years resolutely adhered to, the old plan of writing everything with his own hand. When I once, some time afterwards, expressed my surprise that he did not consult his ease, and spare his eyesight at all events, by occasionally dictating, he answered—"I should as soon think of getting into a sedan-chair while I can use my legs."

I rode out to Abbotsford with John Ballantyne towards the end of the spring vacation, and though he had warned me of a sad change in Scott's appearance, it was far beyond what I had been led to anticipate. He had lost a great deal of flesh—his clothes hung loose about him—his countenance was meagre, haggard, and of the deadliest yellow of the jaundice—and his hair, which a few weeks before had been but slightly sprinkled with grey, was now almost literally snow-white. His eye, however, retained its fire unquenched; indeed it seemed to have gained in brilliancy from the new languor of the other features; and he received us with all the usual cordiality, and even with little perceptible diminishment in the sprightliness of his manner. He sat at the table while we dined, but partook only of some rice pudding; and after the cloth was drawn, while sipping his toast and water, pushed round the bottle in his old style, and talked with easy cheerfulness of the stout battle he had fought, and which he now seemed to consider as won.

"One day there was," he said, "when I certainly began to have great doubts whether the mischief was not getting at my mind—and I'll tell you how I tried to reassure myself on that score. I was quite unfit for anything like original composition;

but I thought if I could turn an old German ballad I had been reading into decent rhymes, I might dismiss my worst apprehensions—and you shall see what became of the experiment.” He then desired his daughter Sophia to fetch the MS. of *The Noble Moringer*, as it had been taken down from his dictation, partly by her and partly by Mr. Laidlaw, during one long and painful day while he lay in bed. He read it to us as it stood, and seeing that both Ballantyne and I were much pleased with the verses, he said he should copy them over,—make them a little “tighter about the joints,”—and give them to the *Register* for 1816.

Within a few days he heard tidings perhaps as heavy as ever reached him. His ever steadfast friend, to whom he looked up, moreover, with the feelings of the true old border clansman, Charles, Duke of Buccleuch, died on April 20th, at Lisbon. Captain Adam Fergusson had accompanied the Duke, whose health had for years been breaking, to the scene of his own old campaigns : he now attended his Grace’s remains to England ; and on landing received a letter, in which Scott said : “I have had another eight days’ visit of my disorder, which has confined me chiefly to my bed. It will perhaps shade off into a mild chronic complaint—if it returns frequently with the same violence, I shall break up by degrees, and follow my dear chief. I thank God I can look at this possibility without much anxiety, and without a shadow of fear.”

On May 11th he returned to Edinburgh, and was present at the opening of the Court ; when all who saw him were as much struck as I had been at Abbotsford with the change in his appearance. He was unable to persist in attendance at the Clerk’s table—for several weeks afterwards I think he seldom if ever attempted it ; and I well remember that, when *The Bride of Lammermoor* and *Legend of Montrose* at length came out (which was on June 10th), he was known to be confined to bed, and the book was received amidst the deep general impression that we should see no more of that parentage.

“*The Bride of Lammermoor*” (says James Ballantyne) “was not only writtten, but published before Mr. Scott was able to rise from his bed ; and he assured me that when it was first put into his hands in a complete shape, he did not recollect one single incident, character, or conversation it contained. He did not desire me to understand, nor did I understand, that his illness had erased from his memory the original incidents of the story, with which he had been acquainted from his boyhood.

These remained rooted where they had ever been ; or, to speak more explicitly, he remembered the general facts of the existence of the father and mother, of the son and daughter, of the rival lovers, of the compulsory marriage, and the attack made by the bride upon the hapless bridegroom, with the general catastrophe of the whole. All these things he recollected just as he did before he took to his bed : but he literally recollected nothing else—not a single character woven by the romancer, not one of the many scenes and points of humour, nor anything with which he was connected as the writer of the work. ‘For a long time,’ he said, ‘I felt myself very uneasy in the course of my reading, lest I should be startled by meeting something altogether glaring and fantastic. However, I recollected that you had been the printer, and I felt sure that you would not have permitted anything of this sort to pass.’ ‘Well,’ I said, ‘upon the whole, how did you like it ?’—‘Why,’ he said, ‘as a whole, I felt it monstrous gross and grotesque ; but still the worst of it made me laugh, and I trusted the good-natured public would not be less indulgent.’ I do not think I ever ventured to lead to the discussion of this singular phenomenon again ; but you may depend upon it, that what I have now said is as distinctly reported as if it had been taken down in short-hand at the moment ; I believe you will agree with me in thinking that the history of the human mind contains nothing more wonderful.”

I must not forget to set down what Sophia Scott afterwards told me of her father’s conduct upon one night in June, when he really did despair of himself. He then called his children about his bed, and took leave of them with solemn tenderness. After giving them, one by one, such advice as suited their years and characters, he added,—“For myself, my dears, I am unconscious of ever having done any man an injury, or omitted any fair opportunity of doing any man a benefit. I well know that no human life can appear otherwise than weak and filthy in the eyes of God : but I rely on the merits and intercession of our Redeemer.” He then laid his hand on their heads, and said—“God bless you ! Live so that you may all hope to meet each other in a better place hereafter. And now leave me, that I may turn my face to the wall.” They obeyed him ; but he presently fell into a deep sleep ; and when he awoke from it after many hours, the crisis of extreme danger was felt by himself, and pronounced by his physician, to have been overcome.

The Tales of the Third Series would have been read with indulgence, had they needed it ; for the painful circumstances under which they must have been produced were in part known wherever an English newspaper made its way ; but I believe that, except in typical errors, from the author's inability to correct proof-sheets, no one ever affected to perceive in either work the slightest symptom of his malady. Dugald Dalgetty was placed by acclamation in the same rank with Bailie Jarvie—a conception equally new, just, and humorous, and worked out in all the details, as if it had formed the luxurious entertainment of a chair as easy as was ever shaken by Rabelais ; and though the character of Montrose himself seemed hardly to have been treated so fully as the subject merited, the accustomed rapidity of the novelist's execution would have been enough to account for any such defect. Caleb Balderstone—(the hero of one of the many ludicrous delineations which he owed to the late Lord Haddington)—was pronounced at the time, by more than one critic, a mere caricature ; and, although he himself would never, in after days, admit this censure to be just, he allowed that “ he might have sprinkled rather too much parsley over his chicken.” But even that blemish, for I grant that I think it a serious one, could not disturb the profound interest and pathos of *The Bride of Lammermoor*—to my fancy the most pure and powerful of all the tragedies that Scott ever penned.

Abbotsford had, in the ensuing autumn, the honour of a visit from Prince Leopold, now King of Belgium, who had been often in Scott's company in Paris in 1815 ; and his Royal Highness was followed by many other distinguished guests ; none of whom, from what they saw, would have doubted that the masons and foresters fully occupied their host's time. He was all the while, however, making steady progress with his *Ivanhoe*—and that although he was so far from entire recovery, that Mr. Laidlaw continued to produce most of the MS. from his dictation.

The approach of winter brought a very alarming aspect of things in our manufacturing districts ; and there was throughout Scotland a general revival of the old volunteer spirit. Scott did not now dream of rejoining the Light Horse of Edinburgh, which he took much pleasure in seeing re-organised ; but in conjunction with his neighbour the laird of Gala, he planned the raising of a body of Border Sharpshooters, and was highly gratified by the readiness with which a hundred young men from his own immediate neighbourhood sent in their names,

making no condition but that the Sheriff himself should be the commandant. He was very willing to accept that stipulation; and Laidlaw was instantly directed to look out for a stalwart charger, a fit successor for the Brown Adams of former days. But the progress of disaffection was arrested before this scheme could be carried into execution. It was in the midst of that alarm that he put forth the brief, but beautiful series of papers entitled *The Visionary*.

In December he had an extraordinary accumulation of distress in his family circle. Within ten days he lost his uncle Dr. Rutherford; his dear aunt Christian Rutherford; and his excellent mother. On her death he says to Lady Louisa Stuart (who had seen and been much pleased with the old lady): "If I have been able to do anything in the way of painting the past times, it is very much from the studies with which she presented me. She connected a long period of time with the present generation, for she remembered, and had often spoken with, a person who perfectly recollected the battle of Dunbar, and Oliver Cromwell's subsequent entry into Edinburgh. She preserved her faculties to the very day before her final illness; for our friends Mr. and Mrs. Scott of Harden visited her on the Sunday, and, coming to our house after, were expressing their surprise at the alertness of her mind, and the pleasure which she had in talking over both ancient and modern events. She had told them with great accuracy the real story of the Bride of Lammermuir, and pointed out wherein it differed from the novel. She had all the names of the parties, and detailed (for she was a great genealogist) their connexion with existing families. On the subsequent Monday she was struck with a paralytic affection, suffered little, and that with the utmost patience; and what was God's reward, and a great one to her innocent and benevolent life, she never knew that her brother and sister, the last thirty years younger than herself, had trodden the dark path before her. She was a strict economist, which she said enabled her to be liberal; out of her little income of about £300 a-year, she bestowed at least a third in well-chosen charities, and with the rest lived like a gentlewoman, and even with hospitality more general than seemed to suit her age; yet I could never prevail on her to accept of any assistance. You cannot conceive how affecting it was to me to see the little preparation of presents which she had assorted for the New Year—for she was a great observer of the old fashions of her period—and to think that

the kind heart was cold which delighted in all these acts of kindly affection."

There is in the library at Abbotsford a fine copy of Baskerville's folio Bible, two volumes, printed at Cambridge in 1763; and there appears on the blank leaf, in the trembling handwriting of Scott's mother, this inscription: "*To my dear son, Walter Scott, from his affectionate Mother, Anne Rutherford—January 1st, 1819.*" Under these words her son has written as follows: "This Bible was the gift of my grandfather Dr. John Rutherford, to my mother, and presented by her to me; being alas! the last gift which I was to receive from that excellent parent, and, as I verily believe, the thing which she most loved in the world,—not only in humble veneration of the sacred contents, but as the dearest pledge of her father's affection to her. As such she gave it to me; and as such I bequeath it to those who may represent me—charging them carefully to preserve the same, in memory of those to whom it has belonged. 1820."

On December 18, while his house was thus saddened, appeared his *Ivanhoe*. It was received throughout England with a more clamorous delight than any of the *Scotch novels* had been. The volumes (three in number) were now, for the first time, of the post 8vo form, with a finer paper than hitherto, the press-work much more elegant, and the price accordingly raised from eight shillings the volume to ten; yet the copies sold in this original shape were twelve thousand.

I ought to have mentioned sooner, that the original intention was to bring out *Ivanhoe* as the production of a new hand, and that to assist this impression, the work was printed in a size and manner unlike the preceding ones; but Constable, when the day of publication approached, remonstrated against this experiment, and it was accordingly abandoned.

Scott dictated the greater part of this romance. The portion of the MS. which is his own, appears, however, not only as well and firmly executed as that of any of the *Tales of my Landlord*, but distinguished by having still fewer erasures and interlineations, and also by being in a smaller hand. The fragment is beautiful to look at—many pages together without one alteration. It is, I suppose, superfluous to add, that in no instance did Scott re-write his prose before sending it to the press. Whatever may have been the case with his poetry, the world uniformly received the *prima cura* of the novelist.

The publication of *Ivanhoe* marks the most brilliant epoch

in Scott's history as the literary favourite of his contemporaries. With the novel which he next put forth, the immediate sale of these works began gradually to decline ; and though, even when that had reached its lowest declension, it was still far above the most ambitious dreams of any other novelist, yet the publishers were afraid the announcement of anything like a falling-off might cast a damp over the spirits of the author. He was allowed to remain for several years under the impression that whatever novel he threw off commanded at once the old triumphant sale of ten or twelve thousand, and was afterwards, when included in the collective edition, to be circulated in that shape also as widely as *Waverley* or *Ivanhoe*. In my opinion, it would have been very unwise in the booksellers to give Scott any unfavourable tidings upon such subjects after the commencement of the malady which proved fatal to him,—for that from the first shook his mind ; but I think they took a false measure of the man when they hesitated to tell him exactly how the matter stood, throughout 1820 and the three or four following years, when his intellect was as vigorous as it ever had been, and his heart as courageous ; and I regret their scruples (among other reasons), because the years now mentioned were the most costly ones in his life ; and for every twelvemonths in which any man allows himself, or is encouraged by others, to proceed in a course of unwise expenditure, it becomes proportionably more difficult for him to pull up when the mistake is at length detected or recognised.

About the middle of February—it having been ere that time arranged that I should marry his eldest daughter in the course of the spring,—I accompanied him and part of his family on one of those flying visits to Abbotsford, with which he often indulged himself on a Saturday during term. Upon such occasions Scott appeared at the usual hour in Court, but wearing, instead of the official suit of black, his country morning dress—green jacket and so forth—under the clerk's gown ; a licence of which many gentlemen of the long robe had been accustomed to avail themselves in the days of his youth—it being then considered as the authentic badge that they were lairds as well as lawyers—but which, to use the dialect of the place, had fallen into *desuetude* before I knew the Parliament House. He was, I think, one of the two or three, or at most the half-dozen, who still adhered to this privilege of their order ; and it has now, in all likelihood, become quite obsolete, like the ancient custom, a part of the same system, for all Scotch barristers to

appear without gowns or wigs, and in coloured clothes, when upon circuit. At noon, when the Court broke up, Peter Mathieson was sure to be in attendance in the Parliament Close, and five minutes after, the gown had been tossed off, and Scott, rubbing his hands for glee, was under weigh for Tweedside. On this occasion, he was, of course, in mourning; but I have thought it worth while to preserve the circumstance of his usual Saturday's costume. As we proceeded, he talked without reserve of the novel of *The Monastery*, of which he had the first volume with him: and mentioned, what he had probably forgotten when he wrote the Introduction of 1830, that a good deal of that volume had been composed before he concluded *Ivanhoe*. "It was a relief," he said, "to interlay the scenery most familiar to me, with the strange world for which I had to draw so much on imagination."

Next morning there appeared at breakfast John Ballantyne, who had at this time a hunting-box a few miles off, in the vale of the Leader—and with him Mr. Constable, his guest; and it being a fine clear day, as soon as Scott had read the Church service and one of Jeremy Taylor's sermons, we all sallied out, before noon, on a perambulation of his upland territories; Maida and the rest of the favourites accompanying our march.

We were all delighted to see how completely Scott had recovered his bodily vigour, and none more so than Constable, who, as he puffed and panted after him up one ravine and down another, often stopped to wipe his forehead, and remarked that "it was not every author who should lead him such a dance." But Purdie's face shone with rapture as he observed how severely the swag-bellied bookseller's activity was taxed. Scott exclaiming exultingly, though perhaps for the tenth time, "This will be a glorious spring for our trees, Tom!"—"You may say that, Shirra," quoth Tom,—and then lingering a moment for Constable,—"My certy," he added, scratching his head, "and I think it will be a grand season for *our buiks* too." But indeed Tom always talked of *our buiks* as if they had been as regular products of the soil as *our aits* and *our birks*. Having threaded, first the Hexilcleugh, and then the Rhymer's Glen, we arrived at Huntley Burn, where the hospitality of the kind *Weird-Sisters*, as Scott called the Miss Fergussons, reanimated our exhausted Bibliopoles, and gave them courage to extend their walk a little further down the same famous brook. Here there was a small cottage in a very sequestered situation, by making some little additions to which Scott thought it might be converted into a

suitable summer residence for his daughter and future son-in-law. The details of that plan were soon settled—it was agreed on all hands that a sweeter scene of seclusion could not be fancied. He repeated some verses of Rogers' *Wish*, which paint the spot :—

“ Mine be a cot beside the hill—
 A bee-hive's hum shall soothe my ear ;
 A willowy brook that turns a mill,
 With many a fall shall linger near : ” etc.

But when he came to the stanza—

“ And Lucy at her wheel shall sing,
 In russet-gown and apron blue,”

he departed from the text, adding—

“ But if Bluestockings here you bring,
 The Great Unknown won't dine with you.”

Johnny Ballantyne, a projector to the core, was particularly zealous about this embryo establishment. Foreseeing that he should have had walking enough ere he reached Huntley Burn, his dapper little Newmarket groom had been ordered to fetch Old Mortality thither, and now, mounted on his fine hunter, he capered about us, looking pallid and emaciated as a ghost, but as gay and cheerful as ever, and would fain have been permitted to ride over hedge and ditch to mark out the proper line of the future avenue. Scott admonished him that the country-people, if they saw him at such work, would take the whole party for heathens ; and clapping spurs to his horse, he left us. “ The deil's in the body,” quoth Tom Purdie ; “ he'll be ower every *yett* atween this and Turn-again, though it be the Lord's day. I wadna wonder if he were to be *ceeted* before the Session.”—“ Be sure, Tam,” cries Constable, “ that you egg on the Dominie to blaw up his father—I wouldna grudge a hundred miles o' gait to see the ne'er-do-weel on the stool, and neither, I'll be sworn, would the Sheriff.”—“ Na, na,” quoth the Sheriff, “ we'll let sleeping dogs be, Tam.”

As we walked homeward, Scott, being a little fatigued, laid his left hand on Tom's shoulder, and leaned heavily for support, chatting to his “ Sunday poney,” as he called the affectionate fellow, just as freely as with the rest of the party, and Tom put in his word shrewdly and manfully, and grinned and grunted whenever the joke chanced to be within his apprehension. It was easy to see that his heart swelled within him from the moment that the Sheriff got his collar in his gripe.

There arose a little dispute between them about what tree or trees ought to be cut down in a hedge-row that we passed ; and Scott seemed somewhat ruffled with finding that some previous hints of his on that head had not been attended to. When we got into motion again, his hand was on Constable's shoulder—and Tom dropped a pace or two to the rear, until we approached a gate, when he jumped forward and opened it. "Give us a pinch of your snuff, Tom," quoth the Sheriff. Tom's mull was produced, and the hand resumed its position. I was much diverted with Tom's behaviour when we at length reached Abbotsford. There were some garden chairs on the green in front of the cottage porch. Scott sat down on one of them to enjoy the view of his new tower as it gleamed in the sunset, and Constable and I did the like. Mr. Purdie remained lounging near us for a few minutes, and then asked the Sheriff "to speak a word." They withdrew together into the garden—and Scott presently rejoined us with a particularly comical expression of face. As soon as Tom was out of sight, he said—"Will ye guess what he has been saying, now ?—Well, this is a great satisfaction ! Tom assures me that he has thought the matter over, and *will take my advice* about the thinning of that clump behind Captain Fergusson's."

I must not forget, that whoever might be at Abbotsford, Tom always appeared at his master's elbow on Sunday, when dinner was over, and drank long life to the Laird and the Lady and all the good company, in a quaigh of whisky, or a tumbler of wine, according to his fancy. I believe Scott has somewhere expressed in print his satisfaction that, among all the changes of our manners, the ancient freedom of personal intercourse may still be indulged between a master and an *out-of-doors* servant ; but in truth he kept by the old fashion even with domestic servants, to an extent which I have hardly seen practised by any other gentleman. He conversed with his coachman if he sat by him, as he often did, on the box—with his footman, if he happened to be in the rumble ; and when there was any very young lad in the household, he held it a point of duty to see that his employments were so arranged as to leave time for advancing his education, made him bring his copy-book once a-week to the library, and examined him as to all that he was doing. Indeed he did not confine this humanity to his own people. Any steady servant of a friend of his was soon considered as a sort of friend too, and was sure to have a kind little colloquy to himself at coming and going. With all this,

Scott was a very rigid enforcer of discipline—contrived to make it thoroughly understood by all about him, that they must do their part by him as he did his by them; and the result was happy. I never knew any man so well served as he was—so carefully, so respectfully, and so silently; and I cannot help doubting if in any department of human operations real kindness ever compromised real dignity.

CHAPTER XI

Scott's Baronetcy—Portrait by Lawrence and Bust by Chantrey—Presidency of the Royal Society of Edinburgh—Hospitalities and Sports at Abbotsford—Publication of *The Monastery*—*The Abbot*—and *Kenilworth*. 1820.

THE novel of *The Monastery* was published in the beginning of March, 1820. It appeared not in the post 8vo form of *Ivanhoe*, but in 3 vols. 12mo, like the earlier works of the series. In fact, a few sheets of *The Monastery* had been printed before Scott agreed to let *Ivanhoe* have "By the Author of *Waverley*" on its title-page; and the different shapes of the two books belonged to the abortive scheme of passing off "Mr. Laurence Templeton" as a hitherto unheard of candidate for literary success.

At the rising of his Court on the 12th, Scott proceeded to London, for the purpose of receiving his baronetcy, which he had been prevented from doing in the spring of the preceding year by illness, and again at Christmas by family afflictions. The Prince Regent was now King.

One of his first visitors was Sir Thomas Lawrence, who informed him that his Majesty had resolved to adorn the great gallery, then in progress at Windsor Castle, with portraits by his hand of his most distinguished contemporaries; all the reigning monarchs of Europe, and their chief ministers and generals, had already sat for this purpose: on the same walls the King desired to see exhibited those of his own subjects who had attained the highest honours of literature and science—and it was his pleasure that this series should commence with Walter Scott. The portrait was begun immediately, and the head was finished before Scott left town. Sir Thomas has caught and fixed with admirable skill one of the loftiest expressions of his countenance at the proudest period of his life:

to the perfect truth of the representation, every one who ever surprised him in the act of composition at his desk will bear witness. The expression, however, was one with which many who had seen the man often, were not familiar; and it was extremely unfortunate that Sir Thomas filled in the figure from a separate sketch after he had quitted London. When I first saw the head, I thought nothing could be better; but there was an evident change for the worse when the picture appeared in its finished state—for the rest of the person had been done on a different scale, and this neglect of proportion takes considerably from the majestic effect which the head itself, and especially the mighty pile of forehead, had in nature. I hope one day to see a good engraving of the head alone, as I first saw it floating on a dark sea of canvas.

Lawrence told me several years afterwards that, in his opinion, the two greatest men he had painted were the Duke of Wellington and Sir Walter Scott; "and it was odd," said he, "that they both chose usually the same hour for sitting—seven in the morning. They were both as patient sitters as I ever had. Scott, however, was, in my case at least, a very difficult subject. I had selected what struck me as his noblest look; but when he was in the chair before me, he talked away on all sorts of subjects in his usual style, so that it cost me great pains to bring him back to solemnity, when I had to attend to anything beyond the outline of a subordinate feature. I soon found that the surest recipe was to say something that would lead him to recite a bit of poetry. I used to introduce by hook or by crook a few lines of Campbell or Byron; he was sure to take up the passage where I left it, or *cap* it by something better—and then—when he was, as Dryden says of one of his heroes,

‘Made up of three parts fire—so full of heaven
It sparkled at his eyes’—

then was my time—and I made the best use I could of it. The hardest day's work I had with him was once when —— accompanied him to my painting room. —— was in particularly gay spirits, and nothing would serve him but keeping both artist and sitter in a perpetual state of merriment by anecdote upon anecdote about poor Sheridan. The anecdotes were mostly in themselves black enough—but the style of the *conteur* was irresistibly quaint and comical. When Scott came next, he said he was ashamed of himself for laughing so much

as he listened to them; 'for truly,' quoth he, 'if the tithe was fact, — might have said to Sherry—as Lord Braxfield once said to an eloquent culprit at the bar—'Ye're a verra clever chiel', man, but ye wad be nane the waur o' a hanging.'"

It was also during this visit to London that Scott sat to Chantrey for that bust which alone preserves for posterity the cast of expression most fondly remembered by all who ever mingled in his domestic circle. Chantrey's request that Scott would sit to him was communicated through Allan Cunningham, clerk of the works in the great sculptor's establishment. "Honest Allan," in his early days, when gaining his bread as a stone-mason in Nithsdale, made a pilgrimage on foot to Edinburgh, for the sole purpose of seeing the author of *Marmion* as he passed along the street. He was now in possession of a celebrity of his own, and had mentioned to his patron his purpose of calling on Scott to thank him for some kind message he had received, through a common friend, on the subject of those *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song*, which first made his poetical talents known to the public. Chantrey embraced this opportunity of conveying to Scott his own long-cherished ambition of modelling his head; and Scott at once assented to the flattering proposal. "It was about nine in the morning," says Mr. Cunningham, "that I sent in my card to him at Miss Dumergue's in Piccadilly. It had not been gone a minute, when I heard a quick heavy step coming, and in he came, holding out both hands, as was his custom, and saying, as he pressed mine—'Allan Cunningham, I am glad to see you.' I said something," continues Mr. C., "about the pleasure I felt in touching the hand that had charmed me so much. He moved his hand, and with one of his comic smiles said, 'Ay—and a big brown hand it is.' I was a little abashed at first: Scott saw it, and soon put me at my ease; he had the power—I had almost called it the art, but art it was not—of winning one's heart, and restoring one's confidence, beyond any man I ever met."

Chantrey's purpose had been the same as Lawrence's—to seize a poetical phasis of the countenance; and when the poet first sat, he proceeded to model the head as looking upwards, gravely and solemnly. The talk that passed, meantime, had amused and gratified both, and fortunately at parting, Chantrey requested that Scott would come and breakfast with him next morning before they recommenced operations in the studio. He accepted the invitation, and when he arrived again in

Ecclestone Street, found two or three acquaintances assembled to meet him,—among others, his old friend Richard Heber. The breakfast was, as any party in Sir Francis Chantrey's house was sure to be, a gay one, and not having seen Heber in particular for several years, Scott's spirits were unusually excited. "In the midst of the mirth" (says Cunningham) "John (commonly called *Jack*) Fuller, the member for Surrey, and standing jester of the House of Commons, came in. Heber, who was well acquainted with the free and joyous character of that worthy, began to lead him out by relating some festive anecdotes: Fuller growled approbation, and indulged us with some of his odd sallies; things which he assured us 'were damned good, and true too, which was better.' Mr. Scott, who was standing when Fuller came in, eyed him at first with a look grave and considerate; but as the stream of conversation flowed, his keen eye twinkled brighter and brighter; his stature increased, for he drew himself up, and seemed to take the measure of the hoary joker, body and soul. An hour or two of social chat had meanwhile induced Chantrey to alter his views as to the bust, and when Scott left us, he said to me privately, 'This will never do—I shall never be able to please myself with a perfectly serene expression. I must try his conversational look, take him when about to break out into some sly funny old story.' As Chantrey said this, he took a string, cut off the head of the bust, put it into its present position, touched the eyes and mouth slightly, and wrought such a transformation, that when Scott came to his third sitting, he smiled and said—'Ay, ye're mair like yoursel now!—Why, Mr. Chantrey, no witch of old ever performed such cantrips with clay as this.'"

The baronetcy was conferred on him, not in consequence of any Ministerial suggestion, but by the King personally, and of his own unsolicited motion; and when the poet kissed his hand, he said to him—"I shall always reflect with pleasure on Sir Walter Scott's having been the first creation of my reign."

The *Gazette* announcing this was dated March 30th, 1820; and the Baronet, as soon afterwards as he could get away from Lawrence, set out on his return to the North; for he had such respect for the ancient prejudice (a classical as well as a Scottish one) against marrying in May, that he was anxious to have the ceremony in which his daughter was concerned, over before that unlucky month should commence. He reached

Edinburgh late in April, and on the 29th of that month he gave me the hand of his daughter Sophia. The wedding, *more Scotico*, took place in the evening; and adhering on all such occasions to ancient modes of observance with the same punctiliousness which he mentions as distinguishing his worthy father, he gave a jolly supper afterwards to all the friends and connexions of the young couple.

In May, 1820, he received from both the English Universities the highest compliment which it was in their power to offer him. The Vice-Chancellors of Oxford and Cambridge communicated to him, in the same week, their request that he would attend at the approaching Commemorations, and accept the honorary degree of Doctor in Civil Law. It was impossible for him to leave Scotland again in time; and on various subsequent renewals of the same flattering proposition from either body, he was prevented by similiar circumstances from availing himself of their distinguished kindness.

About the middle of August, my wife and I went to Abbotsford; and we remained there for several weeks, during which I became familiarised to Sir Walter Scott's mode of existence in the country. The humblest person who stayed merely for a short visit, must have departed with the impression that what he witnessed was an occasional variety; that Scott's courtesy prompted him to break in upon his habits when he had a stranger to amuse; but that it was physically impossible that the man who was writing the *Waverley* romances at the rate of nearly twelve volumes in the year, could continue, week after week, and month after month, to devote all but a hardly perceptible fraction of his mornings to out-of-doors occupations, and the whole of his evenings to the entertainment of a constantly varying circle of guests. The hospitality of his afternoons must alone have been enough to exhaust the energies of almost any man; for his visitors did not mean, like those of country-houses in general, to enjoy the landlord's good cheer and amuse each other; but the far greater proportion arrived from a distance, for the sole sake of the Poet and Novelist himself, whose person they had never before seen, and whose voice they might never again have an opportunity of hearing. No other villa in Europe was ever resorted to from the same motives, and to anything like the same extent, except Ferney; and Voltaire never dreamt of being visible to his *hunters*, except for a brief space of the day;—few of them even dined with him, and none of them seem to have slept under his

roof. Scott's establishment, on the contrary, resembled in every particular that of the affluent idler, who, because he has inherited, or would fain transmit political influence in some province, keeps open house—receives as many as he has room for, and sees their apartments occupied, as soon as they vacate them, by another troop of the same description. Even on gentlemen guiltless of inkshed, the exercise of hospitality upon this sort of scale is found to impose a heavy tax ; few of them, now-a-days, think of maintaining it for any large portion of the year : very few indeed below the highest rank of the nobility—in whose case there is usually a staff of led-captains, led-chaplains, servile dandies, and semi-professional talkers and jokers from London, to take the chief part of the burden. Now, Scott had often in his mouth the pithy verses—

“Conversation is but carving :—
 Give no more to every guest,
 Then he's able to digest :
 Give him always of the prime,
 And but little at a time ;
 Carve to all but just enough,
 Let them neither starve nor stuff ;
And that you may have your due,
Let your neighbours carve for you :”—

and he, in his own familiar circle always, and in other circles where it was possible, furnished a happy exemplification of these rules and regulations of the Dean of St. Patrick's. But the same sense and benevolence which dictated adhesion to them among his old friends and acquaintance, rendered it necessary to break them when he was receiving strangers of the class I have described above at Abbotsford : he felt that their coming was the best homage they could pay to his celebrity, and that it would have been as uncourteous in him not to give them their fill of his talk, as it would be in your every-day lord of manors to make his casual guests welcome indeed to his venison, but keep his grouse-shooting for his immediate allies and dependants.

Every now and then he received some stranger who was not indisposed to take his part in the *carving* ; and how good-humouredly he surrendered the lion's share to any one that seemed to covet it—with what perfect placidity he submitted to be bored even by bores of the first water, must have excited the admiration of many besides the daily observers of his proceedings. I have heard a spruce Senior Wrangler lecture him

for half an evening on the niceties of the Greek epigram ; I have heard the poorest of all parliamentary blunderers try to detail to him the *pros* and *cons* of what he called the *Truck system* ; and in either case the same bland eye watched the lips of the tormentor. But, with such ludicrous exceptions, Scott was the one object of the Abbotsford pilgrims ; and evening followed evening only to shew him exerting, for their amusement, more of animal spirits, to say nothing of intellectual vigour, than would have been considered by any other man in the company as sufficient for the whole expenditure of a week's existence. Yet this was not the chief marvel : he talked of things that interested himself, because he knew that by doing so he should give most pleasure to his guests. But how vast was the range of subjects on which he could talk with unaffected zeal ; and with what admirable delicacy of instinctive politeness did he select his topic according to the peculiar history, study, pursuits, or social habits of the stranger ! And all this was done without approach to the unmanly trickery of what is called *catching the tone* of the person one converses with. Scott took the subject on which he thought such a man or woman would like best to hear him speak—but not to handle it in their way, or in any way but what was completely, and most simply his own ;—not to flatter them by embellishing, with the illustration of his genius, the views and opinions which they were supposed to entertain,—but to let his genius play out its own variations, for his own delight and theirs, as freely and easily, and with as endless a multiplicity of delicious novelties, as ever the magic of Beethoven or Mozart could fling over the few primitive notes of a village air.

It is the custom in some, perhaps in many country-houses, to keep a register of the guests, and I have often regretted that nothing of the sort was ever attempted at Abbotsford. It would have been a curious record—especially if so contrived—(as I have seen done)—that the names of each day should, by their arrangement on the page, indicate the exact order in which the company sat at dinner. It would hardly, I believe, be too much to affirm, that Sir Walter Scott entertained, under his roof, in the course of seven or eight brilliant seasons when his prosperity was at its height, as many persons of distinction in rank, in politics, in art, in literature, and in science, as the most princely nobleman of his age ever did in the like space of time.—I turned over, since I wrote the preceding sentence, Mr. Lodge's compendium of the British Peerage, and on sum-

ming up the titles which suggested *to myself* some reminiscence of this kind, I found them nearly as one out of six.—I fancy it is not beyond the mark to add, that of the eminent foreigners who visited our island within this period, a moiety crossed the Channel mainly in consequence of the interest with which his writings had invested Scotland—and that the hope of beholding the man under his own roof was the crowning motive with half that moiety. As for countrymen of his own, like him ennobled, in the higher sense of that word, by the display of their intellectual energies, if any one such contemporary can be pointed out as having crossed the Tweed, and yet not spent a day at Abbotsford, I shall be surprised.

It is needless to add, that Sir Walter was familiarly known, long before the days I am speaking of, to almost all the nobility and higher gentry of Scotland ; and consequently, that there seldom wanted a fair proportion of them to assist him in doing the honours of his country. It is still more superfluous to say so respecting the heads of his own profession at Edinburgh : *Sibi et amicis*—Abbotsford was their villa whenever they pleased to resort to it, and few of them were ever absent from it long. He lived meanwhile in a constant interchange of easy visits with the gentlemen's families of Teviotdale and the Forest ; so that mixed up with his superfine admirers of the Mayfair breed, his staring worshippers from foreign parts, and his quick-witted coevals of the Parliament-House—there was found generally some hearty home-spun laird, with his dame, and the young laird—a bashful bumpkin, perhaps, whose ideas did not soar beyond his gun and pointer—or perhaps a little pseudo-dandy, for whom the Kelso race-course and the Jedburgh ball were Life and the World. To complete the *olla podrida*, we must remember that no old acquaintance, or family connexions, however remote their actual station or style of manners from his own, were forgotten or lost sight of. He had some, even near relations, who, except when they visited him, rarely if ever found admittance to what the haughty dialect of the upper world is pleased to designate exclusively as *society*. These were welcome guests, let who might be under that roof ; and it was the same with many a worthy citizen of Edinburgh, habitually moving in an obscure circle, who had been in the same class with Scott at the High School, or his fellow-apprentice when he was proud of earning threepence a page by the use of his pen. To dwell on nothing else, it was surely a beautiful perfection of real universal humanity and politeness, that could enable this

great and good man to blend guests so multifarious in one group, and contrive to make them all equally happy with him, with themselves, and with each other.

I remember saying to William Allan one morning as the whole party mustered before the porch after breakfast—"A faithful sketch of what you at this moment see, would be more interesting a hundred years hence, than the grandest so-called historical picture that you will ever exhibit at Somerset House;" and my friend agreed with me so cordially, that I often wondered afterwards he had not attempted to realise the suggestion. The subject ought, however, to have been treated conjointly by him (or Wilkie) and Edwin Landseer. It was a clear, bright September morning, with a sharpness in the air that doubled the animating influence of the sunshine, and all was in readiness for a grand coursing match on Newark Hill. The only guest who had chalked out other sport for himself was the stanchest of anglers, Mr. Rose; but he, too, was there on his *shelty*, armed with his salmon-rod and landing net, and attended by his humorous squire Hinvies, and Charlie Purdie, a brother of Tom, in those days the most celebrated fisherman of the district. This little group of Waltonians, bound for Lord Somerville's preserve, remained lounging about to witness the start of the main cavalcade. Sir Walter, mounted on Sibyl, was marshalling the order of procession with a huge hunting-whip; and, among a dozen frolicsome youths and maidens, who seemed disposed to laugh at all discipline, appeared, each on horseback, each as eager as the youngest sportsman in the troop, Sir Humphrey Davy, Dr. Wollaston, and the patriarch of Scottish *belles-lettres*, Henry Mackenzie. The Man of Feeling, however, was persuaded with some difficulty to resign his steed for the present to his faithful negro follower, and to join Lady Scott in the sociable, until we should reach the ground of our *battue*. Laidlaw, on a long-tailed wiry Highlander, yclept *Hoddin Grey*, which carried him nimbly and stoutly, although his feet almost touched the ground as he sat, was the adjutant. But the most picturesque figure was the illustrious inventor of the safety-lamp. He had come for his favourite sport of angling, and had been practising it successfully with Rose, his travelling companion, for two or three days preceding this, but he had not prepared for coursing fields, or had left Charlie Purdie's troop for Sir Walter's on a sudden thought; and his fisherman's costume—a brown hat with flexible brims, surrounded with line upon line, and innumerable fly-hooks—jack-

boots worthy of a Dutch smuggler, and a fustian surtout dabbled with the blood of salmon, made a fine contrast with the smart jackets, white-cord breeches, and well-polished jockey-boots of the less distinguished cavaliers about him. Dr. Wollaston was in black, and with his noble serene dignity of countenance might have passed for a sporting archbishop. Mr. Mackenzie, at this time in the 76th year of his age, with a white hat turned up with green, green spectacles, green jacket, and long brown leathern gaiters buttoned upon his nether anatomy, wore a dog whistle round his neck, and had all over the air of as resolute a devotee as the gay captain of Huntley Burn. Tom Purdie and his subalterns had preceded us by a few hours with all the greyhounds that could be collected at Abbotsford, Darnick, and Melrose; but the giant Maida had remained as his master's orderly, and now gambolled about Sibyl Grey, barking for mere joy like a spaniel puppy.

The order of march had been all settled, and the sociable was just getting under weigh, when *the Lady Anne* broke from the line, screaming with laughter, and exclaimed,—“Papa, papa, I knew you could never think of going without your pet.”—Scott looked round, and I rather think there was a blush as well as a smile upon his face, when he perceived a little black pig frisking about his pony, and evidently a self-elected addition to the party of the day. He tried to look stern, and cracked his whip at the creature, but was in a moment obliged to join in the general cheers. Poor piggy soon found a strap round its neck, and was dragged into the background :—Scott, watching the retreat, repeated with mock pathos the first verse of an old pastoral song—

“What will I do gin my hoggie* die?
 My joy, my pride, my hoggie!
 My only beast, I had nae mae,
 And wow! but I was vogie!”

—the cheers were redoubled—and the squadron moved on.

This pig had taken—nobody could tell how—a most sentimental attachment to Scott, and was constantly urging its pretensions to be admitted a regular member of his *tail* along with the greyhounds and terriers; but indeed I remember him suffering another summer under the same sort of pertinacity on the part of an affectionate hen. I leave the explanation for

* *Hog* signifies in the Scotch dialect a young sheep that has never been shorn. Hence, no doubt, the name of the Poet of Ettrick—derived from a long line of shepherds.

philosophers—but such were the facts. I have too much respect for the vulgarly calumniated donkey to name him in the same category of pets with the pig and the hen; but a year or two after this time, my wife used to drive a couple of these animals in a little garden chair, and whenever her father appeared at the door of our cottage, we were sure to see Hannah More and Lady Morgan (as Anne Scott had wickedly christened them) trotting from their pasture to lay their noses over the paling, and, as Washington Irving says of the old white-haired hedger with the Parisian snuff-box, “to have a pleasant crack with the laird.”

But to return to the *chasse*. On reaching Newark Castle, we found Lady Scott, her eldest daughter, and the venerable Mackenzie, all busily engaged in unpacking a basket that had been placed in their carriage, and arranging the luncheon it contained upon the mossy rocks overhanging the bed of the Yarrow. When such of the company as chose had partaken of this refection, the Man of Feeling resumed his pony, and all ascended the mountain, duly marshalled at proper distances, so as to beat in a broad line over the heather, Sir Walter directing the movement from the right wing—towards Blackandro. Davy, next to whom I chanced to be riding, laid his whip about the fern like an experienced hand, but cracked many a joke, too, upon his own jackboots, and surveying the long eager battalion of bush-rangers, exclaimed—“Good heavens! is it thus that I visit the scenery of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*?” He then kept muttering to himself, as his glowing eye—(the finest and brightest that I ever saw)—ran over the landscape, some of those beautiful lines from the Conclusion of the *Lay*—

———“But still,
When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,
And July's eve, with balmy breath,
Waved the bluebells on Newark heath,
When throstles sung on Hareheadshaw,
And corn was green in Carterhaugh,
And flourished, broad, Blackandro's oak,
The aged harper's soul awoke,” etc.

Mackenzie, spectacled though he was, saw the first sitting hare, gave the word to slip the dogs, and spurred after them like a boy. All the seniors, indeed, did well as long as the course was upwards, but when puss took down the declivity, they halted and breathed themselves upon the knoll—cheering gaily,

however, the young people, who dashed at full speed past and below them. Coursing on such a mountain is not like the same sport over a set of fine English pastures. There were gulfs to be avoided and bogs enough to be threaded—many a stiff nag stuck fast—many a bold rider measured his length among the peat-hags—and another stranger to the ground besides Davy plunged neck-deep into a treacherous well-head, which, till they were floundering in it, had borne all the appearance of a piece of delicate green turf. When Sir Humphrey emerged from his involuntary bath, his habiliments garnished with mud, slime, and mangled water-cresses, Sir Walter received him with a triumphant *encore*! But the philosopher had his revenge, for joining soon afterwards in a brisk gallop, Scott put Sibyl Grey to a leap beyond her prowess, and lay humbled in the ditch, while Davy, who was better mounted, cleared it and him at a bound. Happily there was little damage done—but no one was sorry that the sociable had been detained at the foot of the hill.

I have seen Sir Humphrey in many places, and in company of many different descriptions; but never to such advantage as at Abbotsford. His host and he delighted in each other, and the modesty of their mutual admiration was a memorable spectacle. Davy was by nature a poet—and Scott, though anything but a philosopher in the modern sense of that term, might, I think it very likely, have pursued the study of physical science with zeal and success, had he chanced to fall in with such an instructor as Sir Humphrey would have been to him, in his early life. Each strove to make the other talk—and they did so in turn more charmingly than I ever heard either on any other occasion whatsoever. Scott in his romantic narratives touched a deeper chord of feeling than usual, when he had such a listener as Davy; and Davy, when induced to open his views upon any question of scientific interest in Scott's presence, did so with a degree of clear energetic eloquence, and with a flow of imagery and illustration, of which neither his habitual tone of table-talk (least of all in London), nor any of his prose writings (except, indeed, the posthumous *Consolations of Travel*) could suggest an adequate notion. I say his prose writings—for who that has read his sublime quatrains on the doctrine of a Spinoza can doubt that he might have united, if he had pleased, in some great didactic poem, the vigorous ratiocination of Dryden and the moral majesty of Wordsworth? I remember William

Laidlaw whispering to me, one night, when their "rapt talk" had kept the circle round the fire until long after the usual bedtime of Abbotsford—"Gude preserve us! this is a very superior occasion! Eh, sirs!" he added, cocking his eye like a bird, "I wonder if Shakspeare and Bacon ever met to screw ilk other up?"

Since I have touched on the subject of Sir Walter's autumnal diversions in these his latter years, I may as well notice here two annual festivals, when sport was made his pretext for assembling his rural neighbours about him—days eagerly anticipated, and fondly remembered by many. One was a solemn bout of salmon-fishing for the neighbouring gentry and their families, instituted originally, I believe, by Lord Somerville, but now, in his absence, conducted and presided over by the Sheriff. Charles Purdie, Tom's brother, had charge (partly as lessee) of the salmon-fisheries for three or four miles of the Tweed, including all the water attached to the lands of Abbotsford, Gala, and Allwyn; and this festival had been established with a view, besides other considerations, of recompensing him for the attention he always bestowed on any of the lairds or their visitors that chose to fish, either from the banks or the boat, within his jurisdiction. His selection of the day, and other precautions, generally secured an abundance of sport for the great anniversary; and then the whole party assembled to regale on the newly-caught prey, boiled, grilled, and roasted in every variety of preparation, beneath a grand old ash, adjoining Charlie's cottage at Boldside, on the northern margin of the Tweed, about a mile above Abbotsford. This banquet took place earlier in the day or later, according to circumstances; but it often lasted till the harvest moon shone on the lovely scene and its revellers. These formed groups that would have done no discredit to Watteau—and a still better hand has painted the background in the Introduction of *The Monastery*: "On the opposite bank of the Tweed might be seen the remains of ancient enclosures, surrounded by sycamores and ash-trees of considerable size. These had once formed the crofts or arable ground of a village, now reduced to a single hut, the abode of a fisherman, who also manages a ferry. The cottages, even the church which once existed there, have sunk into vestiges hardly to be traced without visiting the spot, the inhabitants having gradually withdrawn to the more prosperous town of Galashiels, which has risen into consideration within two miles of their neighbour-

hood. Superstitious eld, however, has tenanted the deserted grove with aerial beings to supply the want of the mortal tenants who have deserted it. The ruined and abandoned churchyard of Boldside has been long believed to be haunted by the fairies, and the deep broad current of the Tweed, wheeling in moonlight round the foot of the steep bank, with the number of trees originally planted for shelter round the fields of the cottagers, but now presenting the effect of scattered and detached groves, fill up the idea which one would form in imagination for a scene that Oberon and Queen Mab might love to revel in. There are evenings when the spectator might believe, with Father Chaucer, that the

‘Queen of Faëry,
With harp, and pipe, and symphony,
Were dwelling in the place.’”

Sometimes the evening closed with a “burning of the water ;” and then the Sheriff, though now not so agile as when he practised that rough sport in the early times of Ashestiel, was sure to be one of the party in the boat,—held a torch, or perhaps took the helm,—and seemed to enjoy the whole thing as heartily as the youngest of his company—

“’Tis blythe along the midnight tide,
With stalwart arm the boat to guide—
On high the dazzling blaze to rear,
And heedful plunge the barbed spear;
Rock, wood, and scaur, emerging bright,
Fling on the stream their ruddy light,
And from the bank our band appears
Like Genii armed with fiery spears.”*

The other “superior occasion” came later in the season ; October 28th, the birthday of Sir Walter’s eldest son, was, I think, that usually selected for the Abbotsford Hunt. This was a coursing-field on a large scale, including, with as many of the young gentry as pleased to attend, all Scott’s personal favourites among the yeomen and farmers of the surrounding country. The Sheriff always took the field, but latterly devolved the command upon his good friend Mr. John Usher, the ex-laird of Toftfield ; and he could not have had a more skilful or better-humoured lieutenant. The hunt took place either on the moors above the Cauldshields Loch, or over some of the hills on the estate of Gala, and we had commonly, ere we returned, hares enough to supply the wife of every farmer that attended

* See *Poetical Works*, royal 8vo, p. 694.

with soup for a week following. The whole then dined at Abbotsford, the Sheriff in the chair, Adam Fergusson croupier, and Dominie Thompson, of course, chaplain. George, by the way, was himself an eager partaker in the preliminary sport; and now he would favour us with a grace, in Burns's phrase, "as long as my arm," beginning with thanks to the Almighty, who had given man dominion over the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field, and expatiating on this text with so luculent a commentary, that Scott, who had been fumbling with his spoon long before he reached Amen, could not help exclaiming as he sat down, "Well done, Mr. George! I think we've had everything but the view holla!" The company, whose onset had been thus deferred, were seldom, I think, under thirty in number, and sometimes they exceeded forty. The feast was such as suited the occasion—a baron of beef at the foot of the table, a salted round at the head, while tureens of hare-soup and hotch-potch extended down the centre, and such light articles as geese, turkeys, a sucking-pig, a singed sheep's head, and the unfailing haggis, were set forth by way of side-dishes. Blackcock and moorfowl, bushels of snipe, *black puddings*, *white puddings*, and pyramids of pancakes, formed the second course. Ale was the favourite beverage during dinner, but there was plenty of port and sherry for those whose stomachs they suited. The quaighs of Glenlivet were tossed off as if they held water. The wine decanters made a few rounds of the table, but the hints for hot punch soon became clamorous. Two or three bowls were introduced, and placed under the supervision of experienced manufacturers—one of these being usually the Ettrick Shepherd—and then the business of the evening commenced in good earnest. The faces shone and glowed like those at Camacho's wedding: the chairman told his richest stories of old rural life, Lowland or Highland; Fergusson and humbler heroes fought their peninsular battles o'er again; the stalwart Dandie Dinmonts lugged out their last winter's snow-storm, the parish scandal, perhaps, or the dexterous bargain of the Northumberland *tryste*; and every man was knocked down for the song that he sang best, or took most pleasure in singing. Sheriff-substitute Shortrede—a cheerful, hearty, little man, with a sparkling eye and a most infectious laugh—gave us *Dick o' the Cow*, or *Now Liddesdale has ridden a raid*; his son Thomas (Sir Walter's assiduous disciple and assistant in Border Heraldry and Genealogy) shone without a rival in *The Douglas Tragedy* and *The Twa Corbies*;

a weather-beaten, stiff-bearded veteran, *Captain Ormistoun*, as he was called (though I doubt if his rank was recognised at the Horse-Guards), had the primitive pastoral of *Cowdenknowes* in sweet perfection ; Hogg produced *The Women Folk*, or *The Kye comes hame* ; and, in spite of many grinding notes, contrived to make everybody delighted whether with the fun or the pathos of his ballad ; the Melrose doctor sang in spirited style some of Moore's masterpieces ; a couple of retired sailors joined in *Bould Admiral Duncan upon the high sea* ;—and the gallant croupier crowned the last bowl with *Ale, good ale, thou art my darling!* Imagine some smart Parisian *savant*—some dreamy pedant of Halle or Heidelberg—a brace of stray young Lords from Oxford or Cambridge, or perhaps their prim college tutors, planted here and there amidst these rustic wassailers—this being their first vision of the author of *Marmion* and *Ivanhoe*, and he appearing as heartily at home in the scene as if he had been a veritable *Dandie* himself—his face radiant, his laugh gay as childhood, his chorus always ready. And so it proceeded until some worthy, who had fifteen or twenty miles to ride home, began to insinuate that his wife and bairns would be getting sorely anxious about the fords, and the Dumbles and Hoddins were at last heard neighing at the gate, and it was voted that the hour had come for *doch an dorrach*—the stirrup-cup—to wit, a bumper all round of the unmitigated *mountain dew*. How they all contrived to get home in safety, Heaven only knows—but I never heard of any serious accident except upon one occasion, when James Hogg made a bet at starting that he would leap over his wall-eyed pony as she stood, and broke his nose in this experiment of “o’ervaulting ambition.” One comely goodwife, far off among the hills, amused Sir Walter by telling him, the next time he passed her homestead after one of these jolly doings, what her husband's first words were when he alighted at his own door—“Ailie, my woman, I'm ready for my bed—and oh lass” (he gallantly added), “I wish I could sleep for a towmont, for there's only ae thing in this warld worth living for, and that's the Abbotsford Hunt !”

It may well be supposed that the President of the Boldside Festival and the Abbotsford Hunt did not omit the good old custom of *the Kirn*. Every November, before quitting the country for Edinburgh, he gave a *harvest home*, on the most approved model of former days, to all the peasantry on his estate, their friends and kindred, and as many poor neighbours besides as his barn could hold. Here old and young danced

from sunset to sunrise,—John of Skye's bagpipe being relieved at intervals by the violin of some Wandering Willie ;—and the laird and all his family were present during the early part of the evening—he and his wife to distribute the contents of the first tub of whisky-punch, and his young people to take their due share in the endless reels and hornpipes of the earthen floor. As Mr. Morritt has said of him as he appeared at Laird Nippy's kirk of earlier days, "to witness the cordiality of his reception might have unbent a misanthrope." He had his private joke for every old wife or "gausie carle," his arch compliment for the ear of every bonny lass, and his hand and his blessing for the head of every little *Eppie Daidle* from Abbotstown or Broomieles.

The whole of the ancient ceremonial of the *daft days*, as they are called in Scotland, obtained respect at Abbotsford. He said it was *uncanny*, and would certainly have felt it very uncomfortable, not to welcome the new year in the midst of his family, and a few old friends, with the immemorial libation of a *het pint* ; but of all the consecrated ceremonies of the time none gave him such delight as the visit which he received as *Laird* from all the children on his estate, on the last morning of every December—when, in the words of an obscure poet often quoted by him,

"The cottage bairns sing blithe and gay,
At the ha' door for *hogmanay*."

The following is from a new-year's day letter to Joanna Baillie : "The Scottish labourer is in his natural state perhaps one of the best, most intelligent, and kind-hearted of human beings ; and in truth I have limited my other habits of expense very much since I fell into the habit of employing mine honest people. I wish you could have seen about a hundred children, being almost entirely supported by their fathers' or brothers' labour, come down yesterday to dance to the pipes, and get a piece of cake and bannock, and pence a-piece (no very deadly largess) in honour of *hogmanay*. I declare to you, my dear friend, that when I thought the poor fellows who kept these children so neat, and well taught, and well behaved, were slaving the whole day for eighteen-pence or twenty-pence at the most, I was ashamed of their gratitude, and of their becks and bows. But after all, one does what one can, and it is better twenty families should be comfortable according to their wishes and habits, than half that number should be raised above their

situation. Besides, like Fortunio in the fairy tale, I have my gifted men—the best wrestler and cudgel-player—the best runner and leaper—the best shot in the little district ; and, as I am partial to all manly and athletic exercises, these are great favourites, being otherwise decent persons, and bearing their faculties meekly. All this smells of sad egotism, but what can I write to you about save what is uppermost in my own thoughts ? And here am I, thinning old plantations and planting new ones ; now undoing what has been done, and now doing what I suppose no one would do but myself, and accomplishing all my magical transformations by the arms and legs of the aforesaid genii, conjured up to my aid at eighteen-pence a-day.”

“The notable paradox,” he says in one of the most charming of his essays, “that the residence of a proprietor upon his estate is of as little consequence as the bodily presence of a stockholder upon Exchange, has, we believe, been renounced. At least, as in the case of the Duchess of Suffolk’s relationship to her own child, the vulgar continue to be of opinion that there is some difference in favour of the next hamlet and village, and even of the vicinage in general, when the squire spends his rents at the manor-house, instead of cutting a figure in France or Italy. A celebrated politician used to say he would willingly bring in one bill to make poaching felony, another to encourage the breed of foxes, and a third to revive the decayed amusements of cock-fighting and bull-baiting—that he would make, in short, any sacrifice to the humours and prejudices of the country gentlemen, in their most extravagant form, provided only he could prevail upon them to ‘dwell in their own houses, be the patrons of their own tenantry, and the fathers of their own children.’” *

In September, 1820, appeared *The Abbot*—the continuation, to a certain extent, of *The Monastery*, of which I barely mentioned the publication under the preceding March. I have nothing of any consequence to add to the information which the Introduction of 1830 affords us respecting the composition and fate of the former of these novels. It was considered as a failure—the first of the series on which any such sentence was pronounced ;—nor have I much to allege in favour of the White Lady of Avenel, generally criticised as the primary blot—or of Sir Percy Shafton, who was loudly, though not quite so generally, condemned. In either case, considered separately, he seems to have erred from dwelling (in the German taste) on materials

* *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, i. p. viii.

that might have done very well for a rapid sketch. The phantom, with whom we have leisure to become familiar, is sure to fail—even the witch of Endor is contented with a momentary appearance and five syllables of the shade she evokes. And we may say the same of any grotesque absurdity in human manners. Scott might have considered with advantage how lightly and briefly Shakspeare introduced *his* Euphuism—though actually the prevalent humour of the hour when he was writing. But perhaps these errors might have attracted little notice had the novelist been successful in finding some reconciling medium capable of giving consistence and harmony to his naturally incongruous materials. “These,” said one of his ablest critics, “are joined—but they refuse to blend : Nothing can be more poetical in conception, and sometimes in language, than the fiction of the White Maid of Avenel ; but when this ethereal personage, who rides on the cloud which ‘for Araby is bound’—who is

‘Something between heaven and hell,
Something that neither stood nor fell,’—

whose existence is linked by an awful and mysterious destiny to the fortunes of a decaying family ; when such a being as this descends to clownish pranks, and promotes a frivolous jest about a tailor’s bodkin, the course of our sympathies is rudely arrested, and we feel as if the author had put upon us the old-fashioned pleasantry of selling a bargain.”

The beautiful natural scenery, and the sterling Scotch characters and manners introduced in *The Monastery*, are, however, sufficient to redeem even these mistakes ; and, indeed, I am inclined to believe that it will ultimately occupy a securer place than some romances enjoying hitherto a far higher reputation, in which he makes no use of *Scottish* materials.

Sir Walter himself thought well of *The Abbot* when he had finished it. When he sent me a complete copy, I found on a slip of paper at the beginning of volume first, these two lines from *Tom Cribb’s Memorial to Congress*—

“Up he rose in a funk, lapped a toothful of brandy,
And to it again !—any odds upon Sandy !”—

and whatever ground he had been supposed to lose in *The Monastery*, part at least of it was regained by this tale, and especially by its most graceful and pathetic portraiture of Mary Stuart.

For reasons connected with the affairs of the Ballantynes, Messrs. Longman published the first edition of *The Monastery* ;

and similar circumstances induced Sir Walter to associate this house with that of Constable in the succeeding novel. Constable disliked its title, and would fain have had *The Nunnery* instead : but Scott stuck to his *Abbot*. The bookseller grumbled a little, but was soothed by the author's reception of his request that Queen Elizabeth might be brought into the field in his next romance, as a companion to the Mary Stuart of *The Abbot*. Scott would not indeed indulge him with the choice of the particular period of Elizabeth's reign, indicated in the proposed title of *The Armada* ; but expressed his willingness to take up his own old favourite legend of Meikle's ballad. He wished to call the novel, like the ballad, *Cumnor-Hall*, but in further deference to Constable's wishes, substituted *Kenilworth*. John Ballantyne objected to this title, and told Constable the result would be "something worthy of the kennel ;" but Constable had all reason to be satisfied with the child of his christening. His partner, Mr. Cadell, says : "His vanity boiled over so much at this time, on having his suggestion gone into, that, when in his high moods, he used to stalk up and down his room, and exclaim, 'By G——, I am all but the author of the Waverley Novels !'" Constable's bibliographical knowledge, however, it is but fair to say, was really of most essential service to Scott upon many of these occasions ; and his letter proposing the subject of *The Armada*, furnished such a catalogue of materials for the illustration of the period as may, probably enough, have called forth some very energetic expression of thankfulness.

Scott's kindness secured for John Ballantyne the usual interest in the profits of *Kenilworth*,—the last of his great works in which his friend was to have any concern. I have already mentioned the obvious drooping of his health and strength ; yet his manners continued as airy as ever ;—nay, it was now, after his maladies had taken a very serious shape, and it was hardly possible to look on him without anticipating a speedy termination of his career, that the gay hopeful spirit of the shattered and trembling invalid led him to plunge into a new stream of costly indulgence. It was an amiable point in his character, that he had always retained a tender fondness for his native place. He had now taken up the ambition of rivalling his illustrious friend, in some sort, by providing himself with a summer retirement amidst the scenery of his boyhood ; and it need not be doubted, at the same time, that in erecting a villa at Kelso, he calculated on substantial advantages from its vicinity to Abbotsford.

One fine day of this autumn I accompanied Sir Walter to inspect the progress of this edifice, which was to have the title of *Walton Hall*. John had purchased two or three old houses with notched gables and thatched roofs, near the end of the long original street of Kelso, with their small gardens and paddocks running down to the Tweed. He had already fitted up convenient bachelor's lodgings in one of the primitive tenements, and converted the others into a goodly range of stabling, and was now watching the completion of his new *corps de logis* behind, which included a handsome entrance-hall, or saloon, destined to have old Piscator's bust on a stand in the centre, and to be embellished all round with emblems of his sport. Behind this were spacious rooms overlooking the little *pleasance*, which was to be laid out somewhat in the Italian style, with ornamental steps, a fountain and *jet d'eau*, and a broad terrace hanging over the river. In these new dominions John received us with pride and hilarity; we dined gaily, *al fresco*, by the side of his fountain; and after not a few bumpers to the prosperity of Walton Hall, he mounted Old Mortality, and escorted us for several miles on our ride homewards. It was this day that, overflowing with kindly zeal, Scott revived one of the long-forgotten projects of their early connexion in business, and offered his gratuitous services as editor of a Novelist's Library, to be printed and published for the sole benefit of his host. The offer was eagerly embraced, and when, two or three mornings afterwards, John returned Sir Walter's visit, he had put into his hands the MS. of that admirable Life of Fielding, which was followed at brief intervals, as the arrangements of the projected work required, by fourteen others of the same class and excellence. The publication of the first volume of Ballantyne's Novelist's Library did not take place, however, until February, 1821; and notwithstanding its Prefaces, in which Scott combines all the graces of his easy narrative with a perpetual stream of deep and gentle wisdom in commenting on the tempers and fortunes of his best predecessors in novel literature, and also with expositions of his own critical views, which prove how profoundly he had investigated the principles and practice of those masters before he struck out a new path for himself—in spite of these delightful and valuable essays, the Collection was not a prosperous speculation.

Sir James Hall of Dunglass resigned, in November, 1820, the Presidency of the Royal Society of Edinburgh; and the Fellows, though they had on all former occasions selected a

man of science to fill that post, paid Sir Walter the compliment of unanimously requesting him to be Sir James's successor in it. He felt and expressed a natural hesitation about accepting this honour—which at first sight seemed like invading the proper department of another order of scholars. But when it was urged upon him that the Society is really a double one—embracing a section for literature as well as one of science—and that it was only due to the former to let it occasionally supply the chief of the whole body,—Scott acquiesced in the flattering proposal; and his gentle skill was found effective, so long as he held the Chair, in maintaining and strengthening the tone of good feeling and good manners which can alone render the meetings of such a society either agreeable or useful. The new President himself soon began to take a lively interest in many of their discussions—those at least which pointed to any discovery of practical use;—and he by-and-by added some eminent men of science, with whom his acquaintance had hitherto been slight, to the list of his most valued friends:—in particular Sir David Brewster.

I may mention his introduction about the same time to an institution of a far different description,—that called “The Celtic Society of Edinburgh;” a club established mainly for the patronage of ancient Highland manners and customs, especially the use of “the Garb of Old Gaul”—though part of their funds have always been applied to the really important object of extending education in the wilder districts of the north. At their annual meetings Scott was henceforth a regular attendant. He appeared, as in duty bound, in the costume of the Fraternity, and was usually followed by “John of Skye,” in all his plumage.

His son Charles left home for the first time towards the close of 1820—a boy of exceedingly quick and lively parts, with the gentlest and most affectionate and modest of dispositions. This threw a cloud over the domestic circle; but, as on the former occasion, Sir Walter sought and found comfort in a constant correspondence with the absent favourite. Charles had gone to Lampeter, in Wales, to be under the care of the celebrated scholar John Williams, Archdeacon of Cardigan; whose pains were well rewarded in the progress of his pupil.

About Christmas appeared *Kenilworth*, in three vols. post 8vo, like *Ivanhoe*, which form was adhered to with all the subsequent novels of the series. *Kenilworth* was one of the most successful of them all at the time of publication; and it con-

tinues, and, I doubt not, will ever continue to be placed in the very highest rank of prose fiction. The rich variety of character, and scenery, and incident in this novel, has never indeed been surpassed; nor, with the one exception of *The Bride of Lammermoor*, has Scott bequeathed us a deeper and more affecting tragedy than that of Amy Robsart.

CHAPTER XII

Death of John Ballantyne—and William Erskine—George IV. at Edinburgh—Visits of Mr. Crabbe and Miss Edgeworth—Reminiscences by Mr. Adolphus—Publication of *Lives of the Novelists*—*Halidon Hill*—*The Pirate*—*The Fortunes of Nigel*—*Peveril of the Peak*—*Quentin Durward*—and *St. Ronan's Well*. 1821-1823.

BEFORE the end of January, 1821, he went to London at the request of the other Clerks of Session, that he might watch over the progress of an Act of Parliament designed to relieve them from a considerable part of their drudgery in attesting recorded deeds by signature;—and his stay was prolonged until near the beginning of the Summer term of his Court.

On June 16th, 1821, died at Edinburgh John Ballantyne. Until within a week or two before, Sir Walter had not entertained any thought that his end was near. I was present at one of their last interviews, and John's death-bed was a thing not to be forgotten. We sat by him for perhaps an hour, and I think half that space was occupied with his predictions of a speedy end, and details of his last will, which he had just been executing, and which lay on his coverlid; the other half being given, five minutes or so at a time, to questions and remarks, which intimated that the hope of life was still flickering before him—nay, that his interest in all its concerns remained eager. The proof-sheets of a volume in his Novelist's Library lay also by his pillow; and he passed from them to his will, and then back to them, as by jerks and starts the unwonted veil of gloom closed upon his imagination, or was withdrawn again. He had, he said, left his great friend and patron £2,000 towards the completion of the new library at Abbotsford—and the spirit of the auctioneer virtuoso flashed up as he

began to describe what would, he thought, be the best style and arrangement of the book-shelves. He was interrupted by an agony of asthma, which left him with hardly any signs of life; and ultimately he did expire in a fit of the same kind. Scott was visibly and profoundly shaken by this scene and sequel. As we stood together a few days afterwards, while they were smoothing the turf over John's remains in the Canongate churchyard, the heavens, which had been dark and slaty, cleared up suddenly, and the mid-summer sun shone forth in his strength. Scott, ever awake to the "skiey influences," cast his eye along the overhanging line of the Calton Hill, with its gleaming walls and towers, and then turning to the grave again, "I feel," he whispered in my ear,—“I feel as if there would be less sunshine for me from this day forth.”

As we walked homewards, he told me, among other favourable *traits* of his friend, one little story which I must not omit. He remarked one day to a poor student of divinity attending his auction, that he looked as if he were in bad health. The young man assented with a sigh. "Come," said Ballantyne, "I think I ken the secret of a sort of draft that would relieve you—particularly," he added, handing him a cheque for £5 or £10—"particularly, my dear, if taken upon an empty stomach."

I am sorry to take leave of John Ballantyne with the remark, that his last will was a document of the same class with too many of his *states* and *calendars*. So far from having £2,000 to bequeath to Sir Walter, he died as he had lived, ignorant of the situation of his affairs, and deep in debt.

The coronation of George IV. had been deferred in consequence of the unhappy affair of the Queen's Trial. July 19th, 1821, was now announced for this solemnity, and Sir Walter resolved to be among the spectators. It occurred to him that if the Ettrick Shepherd were to accompany him, and produce some memorial of the scene likely to catch the popular ear in Scotland, good service might thus be done to the cause of loyalty. But this was not his only consideration. Hogg had married a handsome and most estimable young woman, a good deal above his own original rank in life, the year before; and expecting with her a dowry of £1,000, he had forthwith revived the grand ambition of an earlier day, and taken an extensive farm on the Buccleuch estate, at a short distance from Altrive Lake. Misfortune pursued the Shepherd—the bankruptcy of

his wife's father interrupted the stocking of the sheep-walk ; and the arable part was sadly mismanaged. Scott hoped that a visit to London, and a coronation poem, or pamphlet, might end in some pension or post that would relieve these difficulties, and when writing to Lord Sidmouth, to ask a place for himself in the Hall and Abbey of Westminster, begged suitable accommodation for Hogg also. Lord Sidmouth answered that Sir Walter's wishes should be gratified, *provided* they would both dine with him the day after the coronation, in Richmond Park, "where," says the letter of the Under-Secretary, "his Lordship will invite the Duke of York and a few other Jacobites to meet you." All this being made known to the tenant of Mount-Benger, he wrote to Scott, as he says, "with the tear in his eye," to signify, that if he went to London he must miss attending the great annual Border fair, held on St. Boswell's Green, on the 18th of every July ; and that his absence from that meeting so soon after entering upon business as a store-farmer, would be considered by his new compeers as highly imprudent and discreditable. "In short," James concludes, "the thing is impossible. But as there is no man in his Majesty's dominions admires his great talents for government, and the energy and dignity of his administration, so much as I do, I will write something at home, and endeavour to give it you before you start." The Shepherd probably expected that these pretty compliments would reach the royal ear ; but however that may have been, his own Muse turned a deaf ear to him—at least I never heard of anything that he wrote on this occasion. Scott embarked without him, on board a new steam-ship called the *City of Edinburgh*, which, as he suggested to the master, ought rather to have been christened the *New Reekie*.

On the day after the coronation, Sir Walter addressed a letter descriptive of the whole ceremonial to Ballantyne, who published it in his newspaper. It has been since reprinted frequently : and will probably possess considerable interest for the student of English history and manners in future times ; for the two next coronations were conducted on a vastly inferior scale of splendour and expense—and the precedent of curtailment in any such matters is now seldom neglected.

At the close of that brilliant scene, he received a mark of homage to his genius which delighted him not less than Laird Nippy's reverence for the *Sheriff's Knoll*, and the Sheffield cutler's dear acquisition of his signature on a visiting ticket. Missing his carriage, he had to return home on foot from

Westminster, after the banquet—that is to say, between two or three o'clock in the morning;—when he and a young gentleman his companion found themselves locked in the crowd, somewhere near Whitehall, and the bustle and tumult were such that his friend was afraid some accident might happen to the lame limb. A space for the dignitaries was kept clear at that point by the Scots Greys. Sir Walter addressed a serjeant of this celebrated regiment, begging to be allowed to pass by him into the open ground in the middle of the street. The man answered shortly, that his orders were strict—that the thing was impossible. While he was endeavouring to persuade the serjeant to relent, some new wave of turbulence approached from behind, and his young companion exclaimed in a loud voice, “Take care, Sir Walter Scott, take care!” The stalwart dragoon, on hearing the name, said, “What! Sir Walter Scott? He shall get through anyhow!” He then addressed the soldiers near him—“Make room, men, for Sir Walter Scott, our illustrious countryman!” The men answered, “Sir Walter Scott!—God bless him!”—and he was in a moment within the guarded line of safety.

Sir F. Chantrey presented the bust, which was finished during the Coronation visit to London, to Sir Walter himself; by whose remotest descendants it will undoubtedly be held in additional honour on that account. The poet had the further gratification of learning that three copies were executed in marble before the original quitted the studio: one for Windsor Castle—a second for Apsley House—and a third for the friendly sculptor's own private collection. The casts of this bust have since been multiplied beyond all numeration. Some years later Scott gave Chantrey some more sittings; and a second bust, rather graver in the expression, was then produced for Sir Robert Peel's gallery at Drayton.

When Sir Walter returned from London, he brought with him the detailed plans of Mr. Atkinson for the completion of his house at Abbotsford;—which, however, did not extend to the gateway or the beautiful screen between the court and the garden—for these graceful parts of the general design were conceptions of his own, reduced to shape by the skill of the Messrs. Smith of Darnick. It would not, indeed, be easy for me to apportion rightly the constituent members of the whole edifice;—throughout there were numberless consultations with Mr. Blore, Mr. Terry, and Mr. Skene, as well as with Mr. Atkinson—and the actual builders placed considerable inventive

talents, as well as admirable workmanship, at the service of their friendly employer. Every preparation was now made by them, and the foundations might have been set about without farther delay ; but he was reluctant to authorise the demolition of the rustic porch of the old cottage, with its luxuriant overgrowth of roses and jessamines ; and, in short, could not make up his mind to sign the death-warrant of his favourite bower until winter had robbed it of its beauty. He then made an excursion from Edinburgh, on purpose to be present at its downfall—saved as many of the creepers as seemed likely to survive removal, and planted them with his own hands about a somewhat similar porch, erected expressly for their reception, at his daughter Sophia's little cottage of Chiefswood.

There my wife and I spent this summer and autumn of 1821—the first of several seasons which will ever dwell on my memory as the happiest of my life. We were near enough Abbotsford to partake as often as we liked of its brilliant society ; yet could do so without being exposed to the worry and exhaustion of spirit which the daily reception of new comers entailed upon all the family except Sir Walter himself. But, in truth, even he was not always proof against the annoyances connected with such a style of open-house-keeping. Even his temper sunk sometimes under the solemn applauses of learned dulness, the vapid raptures of painted and periwigged dowagers, the horse-leech avidity with which underbred foreigners urged their questions, and the pompous simpers of condescending magnates. When sore beset at home in this way, he would every now and then discover that he had some very particular business to attend to on an outlying part of his estate, and craving the indulgence of his guests overnight, appear at the cabin in the glen before its inhabitants were astir in the morning. The clatter of Sibyl Grey's hoofs, the yelping of Mustard and Spice, and his own joyous shout of *reveillée* under our windows, were the signal that he had burst his toils, and meant for that day to "take his ease in his inn." On descending, he was to be found seated with all his dogs and ours about him, under a spreading ash that overshadowed half the bank between the cottage and the brook, pointing the edge of his woodman's axe for himself, and listening to Tom Purdie's lecture touching the plantation that most needed thinning. After breakfast, he would take possession of a dressing-room upstairs, and write a chapter of *The Pirate* ; and then, having made up and despatched his packet for the printer, away to join

Purdie wherever the foresters were at work—and sometimes labour among them strenuously himself—until it was time either to rejoin his own party at Abbotsford, or the quiet circle of the cottage.—When his guests were few and friendly, he often made them come over and meet him at Chiefswood in a body towards evening; and surely he never appeared to more amiable advantage than when helping his young people with their little arrangements upon such occasions. He was ready with all sorts of devices to supply the wants of a narrow establishment; he used to delight particularly in sinking the wine in a well under the *brae* ere he went out, and hauling up the basket just before dinner was announced—this primitive process being, he said, what he had always practised when a young house-keeper—and, in his opinion, far superior in its results to any application of ice; and, in the same spirit, whenever the weather was sufficiently genial, he voted for dining out-of-doors altogether, which at once got rid of the inconvenience of very small rooms, and made it natural and easy for the gentlemen to help the ladies, so that the paucity of servants went for nothing. Mr. Rose used to amuse himself with likening the scene and the party to the closing act of one of those little French dramas, where “Monsieur le Comte” and “Madame la Comtesse” appear feasting at a village bridal under the trees; but in truth, our “M. le Comte” was only trying to live over again for a few simple hours his own old life of Lasswade.

During several weeks of that summer Scott had under his roof Mr. William Erskine and two of his daughters; this being, I believe, their first visit to Tweedside since the death of Mrs. Erskine in September, 1819. He had probably made a point of having his friend with him at this particular time, because he was desirous of having the benefit of his advice and corrections from day to day as he advanced in the composition of *The Pirate*—with the localities of which romance the Sheriff of Orkney and Shetland was of course thoroughly familiar. At all events, the constant and eager delight with which Erskine watched the progress of the tale has left a deep impression on my memory; and indeed I heard so many of its chapters first read from the MS. by him, that I can never open the book now without thinking I hear his voice. Sir Walter used to give him at breakfast the pages he had written that morning; and very commonly, while he was at work again in his study, Erskine would walk over to Chiefswood, that he might have the pleasure

of reading them aloud to my wife and me under our favourite tree, before the packet had to be sealed up for Edinburgh. I cannot paint the pleasure and pride with which he acquitted himself on such occasions. The little artifice of his manner was merely superficial, and was wholly forgotten as tender affection and admiration, fresh as the impulses of childhood, glistened in his eye, and trembled in his voice.

Erskine was, I think, the only man in whose society Scott took great pleasure, during the more vigorous part of his life, that had neither constitution nor inclination for any of the rough bodily exercises in which he himself delighted. The Counsellor (as the survivors of *The Mountain* always called him) was a little man of feeble make, who seemed unhappy when his pony got beyond a footpace, and had never, I should suppose, addicted himself to any out-of-doors sport whatever. He would, I fancy, have as soon thought of slaying his own mutton as of handling a fowling-piece; he used to shudder when he saw a party equipped for coursing, as if murder were in the wind; but the cool meditative angler was in his eyes the abomination of abominations. His small elegant features, hectic cheek, and soft hazel eyes, were the index of the quick sensitive gentle spirit within. He had the warm heart of a woman, her generous enthusiasm, and some of her weaknesses. A beautiful landscape, or a fine strain of music, would send the tears rolling down his cheek; and though capable, I have no doubt, of exhibiting, had his duty called him to do so, the highest spirit of a hero or a martyr, he had very little command over his nerves amidst circumstances such as men of ordinary mould (to say nothing of iron fabrics like Scott's) regard with indifference. He would dismount to lead his horse down what his friend hardly perceived to be a descent at all; grew pale at a precipice; and, unlike the White Lady of Avenel, would go a long way round for a bridge.

Erskine had as yet been rather unfortunate in his professional career, and thought a sheriffship by no means the kind of advancement due to his merits, and which his connexions might naturally have secured for him. These circumstances had at the time when I first observed him tinged his demeanour; he had come to intermingle a certain wayward snappishness now and then with his forensic exhibitions, and in private seemed inclined (though altogether incapable of abandoning the Tory party) to say bitter things of people in high places; but, with these exceptions, never was benevolence towards all the human race

more lively and overflowing than his evidently was, even when he considered himself as one who had reason to complain of his luck in the world. Now, however, these little asperities had disappeared ; one great real grief had cast its shadow over him, and submissive to the chastisement of Heaven, he had no longer any thoughts for the petty misuse of mankind. Meanwhile he shrunk from the collisions of general society, and lived almost exclusively in his own little circle of intimates. His conversation, though somewhat precise and finical on the first impression, was rich in knowledge. His literary ambition, active and aspiring at the outset, had long before this time merged in his profound veneration for Scott ; but he still read a great deal, and did so as much I believe with a view to assisting Scott by hints and suggestions, as for his own amusement. He had much of his friend's tact in extracting the picturesque from old, and, generally speaking, dull books ; and in bringing out his stores he often shewed a great deal of quaint humour and sly wit. Scott, on his side, respected, trusted, and loved him, much as an affectionate husband does the wife who gave him her heart in youth, and thinks his thoughts rather than her own in the evening of life ; he soothed, cheered, and sustained Erskine habitually. I do not believe a more entire and perfect confidence ever subsisted than theirs was and always had been in each other ; and to one who had duly observed the creeping jealousies of human nature, it might perhaps seem doubtful on which side the balance of real nobility of heart and character, as displayed in their connexion at the time of which I am speaking, ought to be cast.

In the course of a few months more, Sir Walter had the great satisfaction of seeing Erskine at length promoted to a seat on the Bench of the Court of Session, by the title of Lord Kinnedder ; and his pleasure was enhanced doubtless by the reflection that his friend owed this elevation very much, if not mainly, to his own unwearied exertions on his behalf.

In August appeared the volume of the Novelist's Library, containing Scott's *Life of Smollett* ; and it being now ascertained that John Ballantyne had died a debtor, the editor offered to proceed with this series of prefaces, on the footing that the whole profits of the work should go to his widow. The Ballantyne Library crept on to the tenth volume, and was then dropped abruptly ; and the double negotiation with Constable was never renewed.

Lady Louisa Stuart had not, I fancy, read Scott's *Lives*

of the *Novelists* until, some years after this time, they were collected into two little piratical duodecimos by a Parisian bookseller; and on her then expressing her admiration of them, together with her astonishment that the speculation of which they formed a part should have attracted little notice of any sort, he answered as follows: "I am delighted they afford any entertainment, for they are rather flimsily written, being done merely to oblige a friend: they were yoked to a great ill-conditioned, lubberly, double-columned book, which they were as useful to tug along as a set of fleas would be to draw a mail-coach."

I well remember the morning that Scott began *The Fortunes of Nigel*. The day being destined for Newark Hill, I went over to Abbotsford before breakfast, and found Mr. Terry walking about with his friend's master-mason. While Terry and I were chatting, Scott came out, bareheaded, with a bunch of MS. in his hand, and said, "Well, lads, I've laid the keel of a new lugger this morning—here it is—be off to the water-side, and let me hear how you like it." Terry took the papers, and walking up and down by the river, read to me the first chapter of *Nigel*. He expressed great delight with the animated opening, and especially with the contrast between its thorough stir of London life, and a chapter about Norna of the Fitful Head, in the third volume of *The Pirate*, which had been given to him in a similar manner the morning before. I could see that (according to the Sheriff's phrase) *he smelt roast meat*; here there was every prospect of a fine field for the art of *Terryfication*. The actor, when our host met us returning from the haugh, did not fail to express his opinion that the new novel would be of this quality. Sir Walter, as he took the MS. from his hand, eyed him with a gay smile, in which genuine benevolence mingled with mock exultation, and then throwing himself into an attitude of comical dignity, he rolled out, in the tones of John Kemble, one of the loftiest bursts of Ben Jonson's *Mammon*—

"Come on, sir. Now you set your foot on shore
In *Novo orbe*— Pertinax, my Surly,
Again I say to thee aloud, Be rich,
This day thou shalt have ingots."

Sir Walter concluded, before he went to town in November, another negotiation of importance with the house of Constable. They agreed to give for the remaining copyright of the four novels published between December, 1819, and January, 1821—

to wit, *Ivanhoe*, *The Monastery*, *The Abbot*, and *Kenilworth*—the sum of five thousand guineas. The stipulation about not revealing the author's name, under a penalty of £2,000, was repeated. By these four novels, the fruits of scarcely more than twelve months' labour, he had already cleared at least £10,000 before this bargain was completed. I cannot pretend to guess what the actual state of his pecuniary affairs was at the time when John Ballantyne's death relieved them from one great source of complication and difficulty. But I have said enough to satisfy every reader, that when he began the second, and far the larger division of his building at Abbotsford, he must have contemplated the utmost sum it could cost him as a mere trifle in relation to the resources at his command. He must have reckoned on clearing £30,000 at least in the course of a couple of years by the novels written within such a period. The publisher of his *Tales*, who best knew how they were produced, and what they brought of gross profit, and who must have had the strongest interest in keeping the author's name untarnished by any risk or reputation of failure, would willingly, as we have seen, have given him £6,000 more within a space of two years for works of a less serious sort, likely to be despatched at leisure hours, without at all interfering with the main manufacture. But alas! even this was not all. Messrs. Constable had such faith in the prospective fertility of his imagination, that they were by this time quite ready to sign bargains and grant bills for novels and romances to be produced hereafter, but of which the subjects and the names were alike unknown to them and to the man from whose pen they were to proceed. A forgotten satirist well says:—

“The active principle within
Works on some brains the effect of gin;”

but in Sir Walter's case, every external influence combined to stir the flame, and swell the intoxication of restless exuberant energy. His allies knew indeed, what he did not, that the sale of his novels was rather less than it had been in the days of *Ivanhoe*; and hints had sometimes been dropped to him that it might be well to try the effect of a pause. But he always thought—and James Ballantyne had decidedly the same opinion—that his best things were those which he threw off the most easily and swiftly; and it was no wonder that his booksellers, seeing how immeasurably even his worst excelled in

popularity, as in merit, any other person's best, should have shrunk from the experiment of a decisive damper. On the contrary, they might be excused for from time to time flattering themselves, that if the books sold at less rate, this might be counterpoised by still greater rapidity of production. They could not make up their minds to cast the peerless vessel adrift; and, in short, after every little whisper of prudential misgiving, echoed the unfailing burden of Ballantyne's song—to push on, hoisting more and more sail as the wind lulled.

He was as eager to do as they could be to suggest—and this I well knew at the time. I had, however, no notion, until all his correspondence lay before me, of the extent to which he had permitted himself thus early to build on the chances of life, health, and continued popularity. Before *The Fortunes of Nigel* issued from the press, Scott had exchanged instruments, and received his booksellers' bills, for no less than four "works of fiction"—not one of them otherwise described in the deeds of agreement—to be produced in unbroken succession, each of them to fill at least three volumes, but with proper saving clauses as to increase of copy-money in case any of them should run to four. And within two years all this anticipation had been wiped off by *Peveril of the Peak*, *Quentin Durward*, *St. Ronan's Well*, and *Redgauntlet*; and the new castle was by that time complete. But by that time the end also was approaching!

The splendid romance of *The Pirate* was published in the beginning of December, 1821; and the wild freshness of its atmosphere, the beautiful contrast of Minna and Brenda, and the exquisitely drawn character of Captain Cleveland, found the reception which they deserved.

On December 13th, Sir Walter received a copy of *Cain*, as yet unpublished, from Lord Byron's bookseller, who had been instructed to ask whether he had any objection to having the "Mystery" dedicated to him. He says, in answer to Mr. Murray: "I accept with feelings of great obligation the flattering proposal of Lord Byron to prefix my name to the very grand and tremendous drama of *Cain*. Some part of the language is bold, and may shock one class of readers, whose tone will be adopted by others out of affectation or envy. But then they must condemn the *Paradise Lost*, if they have a mind to be consistent. The fiend-like reasoning and bold blasphemy of the fiend and of his pupil lead exactly to the point which was to be expected—the commission of the first murder, and the

ruin and despair of the perpetrator." Such was Scott's opinion of the drama which, when pirated, Lord Eldon refused to protect. It may be doubted if the great Chancellor had ever read *Paradise Lost*.

Whoever reads Scott's letters to Terry might naturally suppose that during this winter his thoughts were almost exclusively occupied with the rising edifice on Tweedside. The pains he takes about every trifle of arrangement, exterior and interior, is truly most remarkable : it is not probable that many idle lords or lairds ever look half so much about such matters. But his literary industry was all the while unresting. His *Nigel* was completed by April, 1822. He had edited Lord Fountainhall's *Chronological Notes*, and several other antiquarian publications. Nor had he neglected a promise of the summer before to supply Miss Baillie with a contribution for a volume of miscellaneous verse, which she had undertaken to compile for the benefit of a friend in distress. With that view he now produced—and that, as I well remember, in the course of two rainy mornings at Abbotsford—the dramatic sketch of *Halidon Hill*; but on concluding it, he found that he had given it an extent quite incompatible with his friend's arrangements for her charitable pic-nic. He therefore cast about for another subject likely to be embraced in smaller compass ; and the Blair-Adam meeting of the next June supplied him with one in *Macduff's Cross*. Meantime, on hearing a whisper about *Halidon Hill*, Constable's junior partner, without seeing the MS., forthwith tendered £1,000 for the copyright—the same sum that had appeared almost irrationally munificent, when offered in 1807 for the embryo *Marmion*. It was accepted, and a letter about to be quoted will shew how well the head of the firm was pleased with this wild bargain.

The *Nigel* was published on May 30th, 1822 ; and was I need not say, hailed as ranking in the first class of Scott's romances. Indeed, as a historical portraiture, his of James I. stands forth pre-eminent, and almost alone ; nor, perhaps, in re-perusing these novels deliberately as a series, does any one of them leave so complete an impression, as the picture of an age. It is, in fact, the best commentary on the old English drama—hardly a single picturesque point of manners touched by Ben Jonson and his contemporaries but has been dovetailed into this story, and all so easily and naturally, as to form the most striking contrast to the historical romances of authors who *cram*, as the schoolboys phrase it, and then set to work

oppressed and bewildered with their crude and undigested burden.

On the day after the publication, Constable, then near London, wrote thus to the author: "I was in town yesterday, and so keenly were the people devouring my friend *Jingling Geordie*, that I actually saw them reading it in the streets as they passed along. I assure you there is no exaggeration in this. A new novel from the Author of *Waverley* puts aside—in other words, puts down for the time, every other literary performance. The smack *Ocean*, by which the new work was shipped, arrived at the wharf on Sunday; the bales were got out by *one* on Monday morning, and before half-past ten o'clock 7,000 copies had been dispersed! I was truly happy to hear of *Halidon Hill*, and of the satisfactory arrangements made for its publication. I wish I had the power of prevailing with you to give us a similar production every three months; and that our ancient enemies on this side the Border might not have too much their own way, perhaps your next dramatic sketch might be Bannockburn. It would be presumptuous in me to point out subjects—[had he quite forgotten *The Lord of the Isles*?]—but you know my craving to be great, and I cannot resist mentioning here that I should like to see a battle of Hastings—a Cressy—a Bosworth Field—and many more."—The *Nigel* was just launched—Constable knew that *Peveril of the Peak* was already on the stocks: yet see how quietly he suggests that a little pinnacle of the *Halidon* class might easily be rigged out once a-quarter by way of diversion, and thus add another £4,000 per annum to the £10,000 or £15,000, on which all parties counted as the sure yearly profit of the three-deckers *in fore*! But Constable, during that residence in England, was in the habit of writing every week or two to Sir Walter, and his letters are all of the same complexion. The ardent bookseller's brain seems to have been well-nigh unsettled; and I have often thought that the foxglove which he then swallowed (his complaint being a threatening of water in the chest) might have had a share in the extravagant excitement of his mind. Occasionally, however, he enters on details, as to which, or at least as to Sir Walter's share in them, there could not have been any mistake; and these were, it must be owned, of a nature well calculated to nourish and sustain in the author's fancy a degree of almost mad exhilaration, near akin to his publisher's own predominant mood. In a letter of the ensuing month, for

example, after returning to the progress of *Peveril of the Peak*, under 10,000 copies of which (or nearly that number) Ballantyne's presses were now groaning, and glancing gaily to the prospect of their being kept regularly employed to the same extent until three other novels, as yet unchristened, had followed *Peveril*, he adds a summary of what was then, had just been, or was about to be, the amount of occupation furnished to the same office by reprints of older works of the same pen ;—“a summary,” he exclaims, “to which I venture to say there will be no rival in our day !” And well might Constable say so ; for the result is, that James Ballantyne and Co. had just executed, or were on the eve of executing, by his order—

A new edition of Sir W. Scott's Poetical Works,			
in ten vols. (miniature)	.	.	5,000 copies.
Novels and Tales, 12 vols. ditto,	.	.	5,000 "
Historical Romances, 6 vols. ditto,	.	.	5,000 "
Poetry from <i>Waverley</i> , etc., 1 vol. 12mo.	.	.	5,000 "
Paper required,	.	.	7,772 reams.
Volumes produced from Ballantyne's press,			145,000 !

To which we may safely add from 30,000 to 40,000 volumes more as the immediate produce of the author's daily industry within the space of twelve months. The scale of these operations was, without question, enough to turn any book-seller's wits ;—Constable's, in his soberest hours, was as inflammable a head-piece as ever sat on the shoulders of a poet ; and his ambition, in truth, had been moving *pari passu*, during several of these last stirring and turmoiling years, with that of his poet. He, too, as I ought to have mentioned ere now, had, like a true Scotchman, concentrated his dreams on the hope of bequeathing to his heir the name and dignity of a lord of acres ; he, too, had considerably before this time purchased a landed estate in his native county of Fife ; he, too, I doubt not, had, while Abbotsford was rising, his own rural castle *in petto* ; and alas ! for “Archibald Constable of Balniel” also, and his overweening intoxication of worldly success, Fortune had already begun to prepare a stern rebuke.

I must pass on to a different excitement—that of the King's visit to his northern dominions in the autumn of 1822. Before this time no Prince of the House of Hanover was known to have touched the soil of Scotland, except one, whose name had ever been held there in universal detestation—the cruel conqueror of Culloden,—“the butcher Cumberland.” Now

that the very last dream of Jacobitism had expired with the Cardinal of York, there could be little doubt that all the northern Tories, of whatever shade of sentiment, would concur to give their lawful Sovereign a greeting of warm and devoted respect ; but the feelings of the Liberals towards George IV. personally had been unfavourably tintured, in consequence of several incidents in his history—above all—(speaking of the mass of population addicted to that political creed)—the unhappy dissensions and scandals which had terminated, as it were but yesterday, in the trial of his Queen. On the whole it was, in the opinion of cool observers, a very doubtful experiment, which the new, but not young king, had resolved on trying. That he had been moved to do so in a very great measure, both directly and indirectly, by Scott, there can be no question ; and I believe it will be granted by all who recall the particulars as they occurred, that his Majesty mainly owed to Scott's personal influence, authority and zeal, the more than full realisation of the highest hopes he could have indulged on the occasion of this progress.

Whether all the arrangements which Sir Walter dictated or enforced, were conceived in the most accurate taste, is a different question. It appeared to be very generally thought, when the first programmes were issued, that kilts and bagpipes were to occupy a great deal too much space. With all respect for the generous qualities which the Highland clans have often exhibited, it was difficult to forget that they had always constituted a small, and almost always an unimportant part of the Scottish population ; and when one reflected how miserably their numbers had of late years been reduced in consequence of the selfish and hard-hearted policy of their landlords, it almost seemed as if there was a cruel mockery in giving so much prominence to their pretensions. But there could be no question that they were picturesque—and their enthusiasm was too sincere not to be catching ; so that by-and-by even the coolest-headed Sassenach felt his heart, like John of Argyle's, "warm to the tartan ;" and high and low were in the humour, not only to applaud, but each, according to his station, to take a share in what might really be described as a sort of grand *Terrification* of the Holyrood chapters in *Waverley* ;—George IV., *anno ætatis* 60, being well contented to enact Prince Charlie, with the Great Unknown himself for his Baron Bradwardine, "*ad exuendas vel detrahendas caligas domini regis post battalliam.*"

But Sir Walter had as many parts to play as ever tasked the Protean genius of his friend Mathews; and he played them all with as much cordial energy as animated the exertions of any Henchman or Piper in the company. His severest duties, however, were those of stage-manager, and under these I sincerely believe any other human being's temper would very soon have given way. The magistrates, bewildered with the rush of novelty, threw themselves on him for advice about the merest trifles; and he had to arrange everything, from the order of a procession to the embroidering of a cross. Ere the green-room in Castle Street had dismissed provosts and bailies, it was sure to be besieged by swelling chieftans, who could not agree on the relative positions their clans had occupied at Bannockburn, which they considered as constituting the authentic precedent for determining their own places, each at the head of his little theatrical *tail*, in the line of the King's escort between the Pier of Leith and the Canongate. It required all Scott's unwearied good humour, and imperturbable power of face, to hear in becoming gravity the sputtering controversies of such fiery rivals, each regarding himself as a true potentate, the representative of princes as ancient as Bourbon; and no man could have coaxed them into decent co-operation, except him whom all the Highlanders, from the haughtiest MacIvor to the slyest Callum Beg, agreed in looking up to as the great restorer and blazoner of their traditionary glories. He had, however, in all this most delicate part of his administration, an admirable assistant in one who had also, by the direction of his literary talents, acquired no mean share of authority among the Celts—General David Stewart of Garth, the historian of the Highland Regiments. On Garth (seamed all over with the scars of Egypt and Spain) devolved the Toy Captain-ship of the *Celtic Club*, already alluded to as an association of young civilians enthusiastic for the promotion of the philabeg;—and he drilled and conducted that motley array in such style, that they formed, perhaps, the most splendid feature in the whole of this plaided panorama. But he, too, had a potential voice in the conclave of rival chieftains, —and with the able backing of this honoured veteran, Scott succeeded finally in assuaging all their heats, and reducing their conflicting pretensions to terms of truce, at least, and compromise. A ballad (now included in his works), wherein these magnates were most adroitly flattered, was understood to have had a considerable share of the merit in this peace-

making ; but the constant hospitality of his table was a not less efficient organ of influence.

About noon of August 14th, the royal yacht and the attendant vessels of war cast anchor in the Roads of Leith ; but although Scott's ballad-prologue had entreated the clergy to "warstle for a sunny day," the weather was so unpropitious that it was found necessary to defer the landing until the 15th. In the midst of the rain, however, Sir Walter rowed off to the *Royal George* ; and, says the newspaper of the day,—“When his arrival alongside the yacht was announced to the King,—‘What!’ exclaimed his Majesty, ‘Sir Walter Scott ! The man in Scotland I most wish to see ! Let him come up.’” When he stepped on the quarter-deck, his Majesty called for a bottle of Highland whisky, and having drunk his health, desired a glass to be filled for him. Sir Walter, after draining his bumper, made a request that the king would condescend to bestow on him the glass out of which his Majesty had just drunk his health ; and this being granted, the precious vessel was immediately wrapped up and carefully deposited in what he conceived to be the safest part of his dress. So he returned with it to Castle Street ; but—to say nothing at this moment of graver distractions—on reaching his house he found a guest established there of a sort rather different from the usual visitors of the time. The poet Crabbe, after repeatedly promising an excursion to the north, had at last arrived in the midst of these tumultuous preparations for the royal advent. Notwithstanding all such impediments, he found his quarters ready for him, and Scott entering, wet and hurried, embraced the venerable man with brotherly affection. The royal gift was forgotten—the ample skirt of the coat within which it had been packed, and which he had hitherto held cautiously in front of his person, slipped back to its more usual position—he sat down beside Crabbe, and the glass was crushed to atoms. His scream and gesture made his wife conclude that he had sat down on a pair of scissors or the like : but very little harm had been done except the breaking of the glass, of which alone he had been thinking. This was a damage not to be repaired : as for the scratch that accompanied it, its scar was of no great consequence, as even when mounting the “*cat-dath*, or battle-garment” of the Celtic Club, he adhered, like his hero Waverley, to the *trews*.

By six o'clock next morning, Sir Walter, arrayed in the Garb of old Gaul (which he had of the Campbell tartan, in memory of one of his great-grandmothers), was attending a muster of

these gallant Celts in the Queen-Street Gardens, where he had the honour of presenting them with a set of colours, and delivered a suitable exhortation, crowned with their rapturous applause. Some members of the Club, all of course in their full costume, were invited to breakfast with him. He had previously retired for a little to his library, and when he entered the parlour, Mr. Crabbe, dressed in the highest style of professional neatness and decorum, with buckles in his shoes, and whatever was then befitting an English clergyman of his years and station, was standing in the midst of half-a-dozen stalwart Highlanders, exchanging elaborate civilities with them in what was at least meant to be French. He had come into the room shortly before, without having been warned about such company, and hearing the party conversing together in an unknown tongue, the polite old man had adopted, in his first salutation, what he considered as the universal language. Some of the Celts, on their part, took him for some foreign abbé or bishop, and were doing their best to explain to him that they were not the wild savages for which, from the startled glance he had thrown on their hirsute proportions, there seemed but too much reason to suspect he had taken them; others, more perspicacious, gave in to the thing for the joke's sake; and there was high fun when Scott dissolved the charm of their stammering, by grasping Crabbe with one hand, and the nearest of these figures with the other, and greeted the whole group with the same hearty *good-morning*.

Perhaps no Englishman of these recent days ever arrived in Scotland with a scantier stock of information about the country and the people than (judging from all that he said, and more expressively looked) this illustrious poet had brought with him in August, 1822. It seemed as if he had never for one moment conceived that the same island in which his peaceful parsonage stood, contained actually a race of men, and gentlemen too, owning no affinity with Englishmen either in blood or in speech, and still proud in wearing, whenever opportunity served, a national dress of their own, bearing considerably more resemblance to an American Indian's than to that of an old-fashioned divine from the Vale of Belvoir. But the aspect of the city on the 15th, was as new to the inhabitants as it could have been even to the Rector of Muston:—every height and precipice occupied by military of the regular army, or by detachments of these more picturesque irregulars from beyond the Grampians—lines of tents, flags, and artillery, circling

Arthur's Seat, Salisbury Crags, and the Calton Hill—and the old black Castle and its rock, wreathed in the smoke of repeated salvoes, while a huge banner royal, such as had not waved there since 1745, floated and flapped over all :—every street, square, garden, or open space below, paved with solid masses of silent expectants, except only where glittering lines of helmets marked the avenue guarded for the approaching procession. All captiousness of criticism sunk into nothing before the grandeur of this vision : and it was the same, or nearly so, on every subsequent day when the King chose to take part in the devised ceremonial. I forget where Sir Walter's place was on the 15th ; but on one or other of these occasions I remember him seated in an open carriage, in the Highland dress, armed and accoutred as heroically as Garth himself (who accompanied him), and evidently in a most bardish state of excitement, while honest Peter Mathieson managed as best he might four steeds of a fierier sort than he had usually in his keeping—though, perhaps, after all, he might be less puzzled with them than with the cocked-hat and regular London Jehu's flaxen wig, which he, for the first and last time, displayed during “the royal fortnight.”

It is, I believe, of the dinner of this August 15th in Castle Street that Crabbe penned the following brief record in his Journal : “Whilst it is fresh in my memory, I should describe the day which I have just passed, but I do not believe an accurate description to be possible. What avails it to say, for instance, that there met at the sumptuous dinner, in all the costume of the Highlanders, the great chief himself, and officers of his company. This expresses not the singularity of appearance and manners—the peculiarities of men all gentlemen, but remote from our society—leaders of clans—joyous company. Then we had Sir Walter Scott's national songs and ballads, exhibiting all the feelings of clanship. I thought it an honour that Glengarry even took notice of me, for there were those, and gentlemen too, who considered themselves honoured by following in his train. There were also Lord Errol, and the Macleod, and the Fraser, and the Gordon, and the Fergusson ; and I conversed at dinner with Lady Glengarry, and did almost believe myself a harper, or bard, rather—for harp I cannot strike ; and Sir Walter was the life and soul of the whole. It was a splendid festivity, and I felt I know not how much younger.”

In the glittering and tumultuous assemblages of that season, the elder bard was (to use one of his friend's favourite similitudes)

very like *a cow in a fremd laning*; and though Scott could never have been seen in colours more likely to excite admiration, Crabbe had hardly any opportunity of observing him in the everyday loveableness of his converse. Sir Walter's enthusiastic excitement about the kilts and the processions seemed at first utterly incomprehensible to him; but by degrees he perceived and appreciated the dexterous management of prejudices and pretensions. He exclaims, in his Journal,—“What a keen discriminating man is my friend!” But I shall ever regret that Crabbe did not see him at Abbotsford among his books, his trees, and his own good simple peasants. They had, I believe, but one quiet walk together, and it was to the ruins of St. Anthony's Chapel and Muschat's Cairn, which the deep impression made on Crabbe by *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* had given him an earnest wish to see. I accompanied them; and the hour so spent, in the course of which the fine old man gave us some most touching anecdotes of his early struggles, was a truly delightful contrast to the bustle and worry of miscellaneous society which consumed so many of his few hours in Scotland.

The King took up his residence at Dalkeith Palace; and here his dinner party almost daily included Sir Walter, who, however, appeared to have derived more deep-felt gratification from his Majesty's kind and paternal attention to his juvenile host (the Duke of Buccleuch was at that time only in his sixteenth year), than from all the flattering condescension lavished on himself. From Dalkeith the King repaired to Holyrood House two or three times, for the purposes of a levée or drawing-room. One Sunday he attended divine service in the Cathedral of St. Giles', when the decorum and silence preserved by the multitudes in the streets, struck him as a most remarkable contrast to the rapturous excitement of his reception on week-days; and the scene was not less noticeable in the eyes of Crabbe, who says in his Journal,—“The silence of Edinburgh on the Sunday is in itself devout.”

There is in the armoury at Abbotsford a sword presented by Charles I. to the great Marquis of Montrose—with Prince Henry's arms and cypher on one side of the blade, and his own on the other. One day the late Duke of Montrose happened to sit next to Sir Walter, and complimented him on the vigorous muster of Border Yeomanry which Portobello Sands had exhibited that morning. “Indeed,” said Scott, “there's scarcely a man left to guard our homesteads.”—“I've a great mind,” quoth the Duke, “to send a detachment of my tail to Abbots-

ford to make prize of my ancestor's sword."—"Your Grace," says Sir Walter, drily, "is very welcome to try—but we're near Philiphaugh yonder."

Another very splendid day was that of a procession from Holyrood to the Castle, whereof the whole ceremonial had obviously been arranged under Scott's auspices, for the purpose of calling up, as exactly as might be, the time-hallowed observance of "the Riding of the Parliament." Mr. Peel (then Secretary of State for the Home Department) was desirous of witnessing this procession privately, instead of taking a place in it, and he walked up the High Street accordingly in company with Scott, some time before the royal cavalcade was to get into motion. The Poet was as little desirous of attracting notice as the Secretary, but he was soon recognised—and his companion, when revisiting Scotland, after the lapse of fourteen years, expressed his lively remembrance of the enthusiastic veneration with which Scott's person was then greeted by all classes of his countrymen. In proposing Sir Walter's memory at a public dinner given to him in Glasgow, in December, 1836, Sir Robert Peel said: "I had the honour of accompanying his late Majesty as his Secretary of State, when he paid a visit to Edinburgh. I suppose there are many of you here who were present on that occasion, at that memorable scene, when the days of ancient chivalry were recalled—when every man's friendship seemed to be confirmed—when men met for the first time, who had always looked to each other with distrust, and resolved in the presence of their Sovereign to forget their hereditary feuds and animosities. In the beautiful language of Dryden—

'Men met each other with erected look—
The steps were higher that they took;
Friends to congratulate their friends would haste,
And long inveterate foes saluted as they pass'd.'

Sir Walter Scott took an active lead in these ceremonies. On the day on which his Majesty was to pass from Holyrood House, he proposed to me to accompany him up the High Street, to see whether the arrangements were completed. I said to him—"You are trying a dangerous experiment—you will never get through in privacy." He said, "They are entirely absorbed in loyalty." But I was the better prophet: he was recognised from the one extremity of the street to the other, and never did I see such an instance of national devotion expressed."

The King at his first levée diverted many, and delighted Scott,

by appearing in the full Highland garb,—the same brilliant *Stuart Tartans*, so called, in which certainly no Stuart, except Prince Charles, had ever presented himself in the saloons of Holyrood. His Majesty's Celtic toilette had been carefully watched and assisted by the gallant Laird of Garth, who was not a little proud of the result of his dexterous manipulations of the royal plaid, and pronounced the King "a vera pretty man." And he did look a most stately and imposing person in that beautiful dress—but his satisfaction therein was cruelly disturbed, when he discovered, towering and blazing among and above the genuine Glengarries and Macleods and Mac-Gregors, a figure even more portly than his own, equipped, from a sudden impulse of loyal ardour, in an equally complete set of the self-same conspicuous Stuart tartans :—

"He caught Sir William Curtis in a kilt—
While throng'd the chiefs of every Highland clan
To hail their brother, Vich Ian Alderman," *

In truth, this portentous apparition cast an air of ridicule and caricature over the whole of Sir Walter's Celtified pageantry. A sharp little bailie from Aberdeen, who had previously made acquaintance with the worthy Guildhall Baronet, and tasted the turtle-soup of his voluptuous yacht, tortured him, as he sailed down the long gallery of Holyrood, by suggesting that, after all, his costume was not quite perfect. Sir William, who had been rigged out, as the auctioneers' advertisements say, "regardless of expense," exclaimed that he must be mistaken—begged he would explain his criticism—and as he spoke, threw a glance of admiration on a *skene dbu* (black knife), which, like a true "warrior and hunter of deer," he wore stuck into one of his garters. "Oo ay—oo ay," quoth the Aberdonian ; "the knife's a' right, mon ; but faar's your speen ?"—(where's your spoon ?) Such was Scott's story—but whether he "gave it a cocked-hat and walking-cane," in the hope of restoring the King's good-humour, so grievously shaken by this heroical *doppel-ganger*, it is not very necessary to inquire.

As in *Hamlet*, there was to be a play within the play ; and, by his Majesty's desire, William Murray's company performed in his presence the drama of *Rob Roy*. The audience were enchanted with the King's hearty laughter at Bailie Jarvie's jokes ;—but I particularly remember his Majesty's shout at Mattie's "nane o' your Lunnan tricks."

* Byron's *Age of Bronze*.

On the 24th the Magistrates entertained their Sovereign with a banquet in the Parliament House ; and Sir Walter Scott was invited to preside over one of the tables. But the most striking homage (though apparently an unconscious one) that his genius received during this festive period, was, when the King, after proposing the health of the Magistrates, rose and said there was one toast more, and but one, in which he must request the assembly to join him,—“I shall simply give you,” said he, “*The Chieftains and Clans of Scotland*—and prosperity to the Land of Cakes.” So completely had this hallucination taken possession, that nobody seems to have been startled at the time by language which thus distinctly conveyed his Majesty’s impression that the marking and crowning glory of Scotland consisted in the Highland clans and their chieftains.

Scott’s early associations, and the prime labours and honours of his life, had been so deeply connected with the Highlands, that it was no wonder he should have taught himself to look on their clans and chiefs with almost as much affection and respect as if he had had more than a scantling of their blood in his veins. But it was necessary to be an eye-witness of this royal visit, in order to comprehend the extent to which he had allowed his imagination to get the mastery over him as to all these matters ; and perhaps it was necessary to understand him thoroughly on such points, in his personal relations, feelings, and demeanour, before one could follow his genius to advantage in some of his most favoured and delightful walks of exertion. The strongest impression, however, which the whole affair left on my mind was, that I had never till then formed any just notion of his capacity for practical dealing and rule among men. I do not think he had much in common with the statesmen and diplomatists of his own age and country ; but I am mistaken if Scott could not have played in other days either the Cecil or the Gondomar ; and I believe no man, after long and intimate knowledge of any other great poet, has ever ventured to say that he could have conceived the possibility of any such parts being adequately filled on the active stage of the world, by a person in whom the powers of fancy and imagination had such predominant sway as to make him in fact live three or four lives habitually in place of one. I have known other literary men of energy perhaps as restless as his ; but all such have been entitled to the designation of *busy bodies*—busy almost exclusively about trifles, and, above all, supremely and constantly conscious of

their own remarkable activity, and rejoicing and glorying in it. Whereas Scott, neither in literary labour nor in continual contact with the affairs of the world, ever did seem aware that he was making any very extraordinary exertion. The machine, thus gigantic in its impetus, moved so easily that the master had no perception of the obstructions it overcame—in fact, no measure for its power. Compared to him, all the rest of the *poet* species that I have chanced to observe nearly—with but one glorious exception—have seemed to me to do little more than sleep through their lives—and at best to fill the sum with dreams; and I am persuaded that, taking all ages and countries together, the rare examples of indefatigable energy, in union with serene self-possession of mind and character, such as Scott's, must be sought for in the roll of great sovereigns or great captains, rather than in that of literary genius.

In the case of such renowned practical masters, it has been usual to account for their apparent calmness amidst the stirring troubles of the world, by imputing to them callousness of the affections. Perhaps injustice has been done by the supposition; but, at all events, hardly could any one extend it to the case of the placid man of the imaginative order;—a great depicter of man and nature, especially would seem to be, *ex vi termini*, a profound sympathiser with the passions of his brethren, with the weaknesses as well as with the strength of humanity. Such assuredly was Scott. His heart was as “ramm'd with life” (to use a phrase of Ben Jonson's) as his brain; and I never saw him tried in a tenderer point than he was during the full whirl of splendour and gaiety that seemed to make every brain but his dizzy in the Edinburgh of August, 1822.

Few things had ever given him so much pleasure as William Erskine's promotion to the Bench. It seemed to have restored his dearest friend to content and cheerfulness, and thus to have doubled his own sources of enjoyment. But Erskine's constitution had been shaken before he attained this dignity; and the anxious delicacy of his conscience rendered its duties oppressive and overwhelming. In a feeble state of body, and with a sensitive mind stretched and strained, a silly calumny, set a-foot by some envious gossip, was sufficient literally to chase him out of life. On his return to Edinburgh about July 20th, Scott found him in visible danger; he did whatever friendship could do to comfort and stimulate him; but all was in vain.

Lord Kinnedder survived his elevation hardly half-a-year—and who that observed Scott's public doings during the three or four weeks I have been describing, could have suspected that he was daily and nightly the watcher of a deathbed, or the consoler of orphans ; striving all the while against

“ True earnest sorrows, rooted miseries,
Anguish in grain, vexations ripe and blown?”

I am not aware that I ever saw him in such a state of dejection as he was when I accompanied him and his friend Mr. Thomas Thomson from Edinburgh to Queensferry, in attendance upon Lord Kinnedder's funeral. Yet that was one of the noisiest days of the royal festival, and he had to plunge into some scene of high gaiety the moment after he returned. As we halted in Castle Street, Mr. Crabbe's mild, thoughtful face appeared at the window, and Scott said, on leaving me,—“ Now for what our old friend there puts down as the crowning curse of his poor player in the Borough—

“ ‘ To hide in rant the heartache of the night.’ ”

The very few letters that he addressed to friends at a distance during the King's stay, are chiefly occupied with Erskine. In one of them he says : “ It would be rather difficult for any one who has never lived much among my good country-people, to comprehend that an idle story of a love intrigue, a story alike base and baseless, should be the death of an innocent man of high character, high station, and well advanced in years. It struck into poor Erskine's heart and soul, however, quite as cruelly as any similar calumny ever affected a modest woman—he withered and sunk. There is no need that I should say peace be with him ! If ever a pure spirit quitted this vale of tears, it was William Erskine's. I must turn to and see what can be done about getting some pension for his daughters.”

The King's stay in Scotland was protracted until August 29th. He then embarked from the Earl of Hopetoun's magnificent seat on the Firth of Forth, and Sir Walter had the gratification of seeing his Majesty, in the moment of departure, confer the honour of knighthood on two of his friends—both of whom, I believe, owed some obligation in this matter to his good offices—namely, Captain Adam Fergusson, deputy-keeper of the Regalia, and Henry Raeburn, R.A., properly selected as the representative of the fine arts in Scotland. This amiable man and excellent artist, however, did not long survive the

receipt of his title. Sir Henry died on July 8th, 1823—the last work of his pencil having been a portrait of Scott for Lord Montague.

On the eve of the King's departure he received a letter from Mr. Peel, saying : "The King has commanded me to acquaint you that he cannot bid adieu to Scotland without conveying to you individually his warm personal acknowledgments. His Majesty well knows how many difficulties have been smoothed, and how much has been effected by your unremitting activity, by your knowledge of your countrymen, and by the just estimation in which they hold you. The King wishes to make you the channel of conveying to the Highland chiefs and their followers, who have given to the varied scene which we have witnessed so peculiar and romantic a character, his particular thanks for their attendance, and his warm approbation of their uniform deportment."

Though Mr. Crabbe found it necessary to leave Scotland without seeing Abbotsford, this was not the case with many less celebrated friends from the south, who had flocked to the Royal Festival. Sir Walter's house was, in his own phrase, "like a cried fair," during several weeks after the King's departure ; and as his masons were then in the highest activity, the tumult within doors and without was really perplexing. He says in his letters, that the excitement of the Edinburgh scenes had thrown him into a fever, and, I believe, it was very lucky that an eruption took place, which compelled him to keep his chamber for some days.

Nor was an unusual influx of English pilgrims the only legacy of "the glorious days" of August. A considerable number of persons who had borne a part in the ceremonies fancied that their exertions had entitled them to some substantial mark of approbation ; and post after post brought despatches from these enthusiasts, to him who was supposed to enjoy, as to matters of this description, the readiest access to the fountain of honour. To how many of these applications he accorded more than a civil answer I cannot tell ; but the Duke of York was too good a *Jacobite* not to grant favourable consideration to his request that one or two half-pay officers who had distinguished themselves in the van of *the Celts*, might be replaced in Highland regiments, and so re-invested with the untheatrical "Garb of old Gaul." Sir Walter had also a petition of his own. This related to a certain gigantic piece of ordnance, celebrated in the history of the Scottish Jameses under the title of *Mons Meg*,

which had been removed from Edinburgh Castle to the Tower in 1746. When Scott next saw the King, after he had displayed his person on the chief bastion of the old fortress, he lamented the absence of Mons Meg on that occasion in language which his Majesty could not resist. There ensued a correspondence with the official guardians of Meg—among others, with the Duke of Wellington, then Master-General of the Ordnance, and though circumstances deferred her restoration, it was never lost sight of, and took place when the Duke was Prime Minister, in 1828.

A more serious petition was a written one in which Sir Walter expressed feelings in which I believe every class of his countrymen were disposed to concur with him cordially—and certainly none more so than George IV. himself. The object was the restoration of the peerages forfeited in consequence of the insurrections of 1715 and 1745; and the honourable families, in whose favour this liberal measure was soon afterwards adopted, appear to have vied with each other in the expression of their gratefulness for his exertions on their behalf.

Early in October, he had another attack of illness. He says to Terry, in a letter full of details about silk-hangings, ebony-cabinets, and so forth: "I have not been very well—a whoreson thickness of blood, and a depression of spirits, arising from the loss of friends, have annoyed me much; and *Peveril* will, I fear, smell of the apoplexy. I propose a good rally, however, and hope it will be a powerful effect. My idea is, *entre nous*, a Scotch archer in the French king's guard, *tempore* Louis XI., the most picturesque of all times." This is the first allusion to *Quentin Durward* and also the species of malady that ultimately proved fatal to Sir Walter Scott. He never mentioned to his family the symptoms which he here speaks of; but long before any serious apoplectic seizure occurred, it had been suspected by myself, and by others of his friends, that he had sustained slight attacks of that nature, and concealed them. The depression of spirits could not, however, have hung over him long. *Peveril* was completed, and some progress had also been achieved with *Quentin Durward*, before the year reached its close. Nor had he ceased to contemplate future labour with firmness and hopefulness. He, in October, received Constable's bills for another unnamed "work of fiction;" and this was the last such work in which the great bookseller was destined to have any concern. The engagement was in fact that redeemed three years afterwards by *Woodstock*.

Peveril of the Peak appeared in January, 1823. Its reception was somewhat colder than that of its three immediate predecessors. The rapidity of the Novelist's execution was put to a severe trial, from his adoption of so wide a canvas as was presented by a period of twenty busy years, and filled by so large and multifarious an assemblage of persons, not a few of them, as it were, struggling for prominence. Finella was an unfortunate conception; what is good in it is not original, and the rest absurd and incredible. Even worse was that condescension to the practice of vulgar romancers, in his treatment of the trial scenes—scenes usually the very citadels of his strength—which outraged every feeling of probability with those who had studied the terrible tragedies of the Popish Plot, in the authentic records of, perhaps, the most disgraceful epoch in our history. The story is clumsy and perplexed; the catastrophe (another signal exception to his rules) foreseen from the beginning, and yet most inartificially brought about. All this is true; and yet might not criticisms of the same sort be applied to half the masterpieces of Shakspeare? And did any dramatist—to say nothing of any other novelist—ever produce, in spite of all the surrounding bewilderment of the fable, characters more powerfully conceived, or, on the whole, more happily portrayed, than those (I name but a few) of Christian, Bridgenorth, Buckingham, and Chiffinch?—sketches more vivid than those of young Derby, Colonel Blood, and the keeper of Newgate?

Among the lounging barristers of the *Outer-House* in those days, Sir Walter, in the intervals of his duty as Clerk, often came forth and mingled much in the style of his own coeval *Mountain*. Indeed the pleasure he seemed to take in the society of his professional juniors, was one of the most remarkable, and certainly not the least agreeable features of his character at this period of his consummate honour and celebrity—but I should rather have said, perhaps, of young people generally, male or female, law or lay, gentle or simple. I used to think it was near of kin to another feature in him, his love of a bright light. It was always, I suspect, against the grain with him, when he did not even work at his desk with the sun full upon him. However, one morning soon after *Peveril* came out, one of our most famous wags (now famous for better things,) namely, Patrick Robertson,* commonly called by the endearing Scottish

* Mr. R. became Dean of the Faculty of Advocates in 1842, and a Judge by the style of Lord Robertson in 1843. His first (and successful) appearance as a Poet was in 1847.

diminutive "Peter," observed that tall conical white head advancing above the crowd towards the fire-place, where the usual roar of fun was going on among the briefless, and said, "Hush, boys, here comes old Peveril—I see *the Peak*." A laugh ensued, and the Great Unknown, as he withdrew from the circle after a few minutes' gossip, insisted that I should tell him what our joke upon his advent had been. When enlightened, being by that time half way across the "babbling hall" towards his own *Division*, he looked round with a sly grin, and said, between his teeth, "Ay, ay, my man, as weel Peveril o' the Peak ony day, as Peter o' the Painch" (paunch)—which, being transmitted to the brethren of the *stove school*, of course delighted all of them, except their portly Coryphæus. But *Peter's* application stuck; to his dying day, Scott was in the Outer-House *Peveril of the Peak* or *Old Peveril*—and, by-and-by, like a good Cavalier, he took to the designation kindly. He was well aware that his own family and younger friends constantly talked of him under this *sobriquet*. Many a little note have I had from him (and so probably has *Peter* also), reproving, or perhaps encouraging, Tory mischief, and signed, "Thine, PEVERIL."

It was, perhaps, some inward misgiving towards the completion of *Peveril*, that determined Scott to break new ground in his next novel; and as he had before awakened a fresh interest by venturing on English scenery and history, try the still bolder experiment of a continental excursion. However this may have been, he was encouraged and strengthened by the return of his friend Skene, about this time, from a tour in France; in the course of which he had kept an accurate and lively journal, and executed a vast variety of clever drawings, representing landscapes and ancient buildings, such as would have been most sure to interest Scott had he been the companion of his wanderings. Mr. Skene's MS. collections were placed at his disposal, and he took from one of their chapters the substance of the *original* Introduction to *Quentin Durward*. Yet still his difficulties in this new undertaking were frequent, and of a sort to which he had hitherto been a stranger. I remember observing him many times in the Advocates' Library poring over maps and gazetteers with care and anxiety.

He was much amused with a mark of French admiration which reached him (opportunately enough) in February—one of the few such that his works seem to have brought him prior to the publication of *Quentin Durward*. He says to Constable :

"A funny Frenchman wants me to accept some champaign for a set of my works. I have written in answer that as my works cost me nothing I could not think of putting a value on them, but that I should apply to you. Send him a set of my children and god-children (poems and novels), and—if he found, on seeing them, that they were worth a dozen flasks of champaign, he might address the case," etc.

A compliment not less flattering was paid within a few weeks after the appearance of *Peveril*. In the epistle introductory of that novel, Clutterbuck amuses Dryasdust with an account of a recent visit from their common parent "the Author of *Waverley*," whose outward man, as it was in those days, is humorously caricatured, with a suggestion that he had probably sat to Geoffrey Crayon for his "Stout Gentleman of No. II.;" and who is made to apologise for the heartiness with which he pays his duty to the viands set before him, by alleging that he is in training for the anniversary of the Roxburghe Club: "He was preparing himself," (said the gracious and portly *Eidolon*) "to hobnob with the Lords of the literary treasures of Althorp and Hodnet in Madeira negus, brewed by the classical Dibdin." This drollery in fact alluded, not to the Roxburghe, but to an institution of the same class which was just at this time springing into life in Edinburgh—the *Bannatyne Club*, of which Scott was the founder and first president. The heroes of the Roxburghe, however, were not to penetrate the mystification of Captain Clutterbuck's report, and from their jovial and erudite board, when they next congregated around its "generous flasks of Burgundy, each flanked by an uncut fifteener"—their Secretary, Dr. Dibdin, wrote to Scott, saying: "The death of Sir M. Sykes having occasioned a vacancy in our CLUB, I am desired to request that you will have the goodness to make that fact known to the AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY, who, from the *Prohème* to PEVERIL OF THE PEAK, seems disposed to become one of the members thereof; and I am further desired to express the wishes of the said CLUB that the said AUTHOR may succeed to the said Baronet."—Sir Walter answered, that he would find means to convey the message to the "Author of *Waverley*;" adding—"As his personal appearance in the fraternity is not like to be a speedy event, the table of the Roxburghe, like that of King Arthur, will have a vacant chair. But if this author, who 'hath fernseed and walketh invisible,' should not appear to claim it before I come to London, with permission

of the Club, I, who have something of adventure in me, although a knight like Sir Andrew Aguecheek, 'dubbed with unhacked rapier, and on carpet consideration,' would, rather than lose the chance of a dinner with the Roxburghe Club, take upon me the adventure of the *siege perilous*, and reap some amends for perils and scandals into which the invisible champion has drawn me, by being his *locum tenens* on so distinguished an occasion."—The Club gladly accepted this offer; and Scott writes again to their Secretary: "Mad Tom tells us, that 'the Prince of Darkness is a gentleman;'"* and this mysterious personage will, I hope, partake of as much of his honourable feelings as his invisibility, and, retaining his incognito, permit me to enjoy, in his stead, an honour which I value more than I do that which has been bestowed on me by the credit of having written any of his novels."—In his way of taking both the Frenchman's civilities and those of the Roxburghers, we see evident symptoms that the mask had begun to be worn rather carelessly. Sir Walter, it may be worth mentioning, was also about this time elected a member of "THE CLUB"—that famous one established by Johnson, Burke, and Reynolds. Moreover, he had been chosen, on the death of the antiquary Lysons, Professor of Ancient History to the Royal Academy—a chair originally founded at Dr. Johnson's suggestion, "in order that *Goldy* might have a right to be at their dinners." I believe he was present at more than one of the festivals of these fraternities. A particular dinner of the Royal Academy, at all events, is recorded with some picturesque details in his essay on the life of Kemble, who sat next to him upon that occasion.

The Bannatyne Club was a child of his own, and from first to last he took a most fatherly concern in all its proceedings. His practical sense dictated a direction of their funds different from what had been adopted by the Roxburghe. Their *Club Books* already constitute a very curious and valuable library of Scottish history and antiquities: their example was soon followed with not inferior success by the Maitland Club of Glasgow, of which too Sir Walter was a zealous associate; by the Spalding Club of Aberdeen—and since his death by a fourth, founded at Edinburgh in his honour, and styled *The Abbotsford Club*—which last has taken a still wider range—not confining their printing to works connected with Scotland, but admitting all materials that can throw light on the ancient

* *King Lear*, Act III. Scene 5.

history or literature of any country, described or handled by the Author of *Waverley*.

At the meetings of the Bannatyne he presided from 1823 to 1831; and in the chair on their anniversary dinners, surrounded by some of his oldest and dearest friends—Thomas Thomson (the Vice-President), John Clerk (Lord Eldin), the Chief-Commissioner Adam, the Chief-Baron Shepherd, Lord Jeffrey, Mr. Constable—and let me not forget his kind, intelligent, and industrious ally, Mr. David Lang, bookseller, the Secretary of the Club—he from this time forward was the unfailing source and centre of all sorts of merriment, “within the limits of becoming mirth.” Of the origin and early progress of their institution, the reader has a full account in his reviewal of Pitcairn’s *Criminal Trials*; and the last edition of his Poems includes that excellent song composed for their first dinner—that of March 9th, 1823—and then sung by James Ballantyne, and heartily chorused by all the aforesaid dignitaries :—

“ Assist me, ye friends of old books and old wine,
To sing in the praises of sage Bannatyne,
Who left such a treasure of old Scottish lore,
As enables each age to print one volume more.
One volume more, my friends—one volume more,
We’ll ransack old Banny for one volume more,”—etc.

Various passages in Scott’s correspondence have recalled to my recollection the wonder with which the friends best acquainted with the extent of his usual engagements observed, about this period, his readiness in mixing himself up with the business of associations far different from the Bannatyne Club. I cannot doubt that his conduct as President of the Royal Society, and as manager of the preparations for the King’s visit, had a main influence in this matter. In these capacities he had been thrown into contact with many of the most eminent of his fellow-citizens, who had previously been accustomed to flavour their notions of him with something of the gall of local politics; and they had soon appreciated his influence, for they must all have had abundant opportunities of observing the ease with which ill humours are engendered, to the disturbance of all really useful discussion, wherever social equals assemble in conclave, without having some official preses, uniting the weight of strong and quick intellect, with the calmness and moderation of a brave spirit, and the conciliating grace of habitual courtesy. Presumption, dogmatism, and arrogance

shrunk from the over-awing contrast of his modest greatness : the poison of every little passion was shamed and neutralised beneath the charitable dignity of his penetration : and jealousy, fretfulness, and spleen felt themselves transmuted in the placid atmosphere of good sense, good humour, and good manners. And whoever might be apt to plead off on the score of personal duty of any sort, Scott had always leisure as well as temper at command, when invited to take part in any business connected with a rational hope of public advantage. These things opened, like the discovery of some new element of wealth, upon certain eager spirits who considered the Royal Society as the great local parent and minister of practical inventions and mechanical improvements ; and they found it no hard matter to inspire their genial chief with a warm sympathy in not a few of their then predominant speculations. He was invited, for example, to place himself at the head of a new company for improving the manufacture of oil gas, and in the spring of this year began to officiate regularly in that capacity. Other associations of a like kind called for his countenance, and received it. The fame of his ready zeal and happy demeanour grew and spread ; and from this time, until bodily infirmities disabled him, Sir Walter occupied, as the most usual, acceptable, and successful chairman of public meetings of almost every sort, apart from politics, a very prominent place among the active citizens of his native town. Any foreign student of statistics who should have happened to peruse the files of an Edinburgh newspaper for the period to which I allude, would, I think, have concluded that there must be at least two Sir Walter Scotts in the place—one the miraculously fertile author whose works occupied two-thirds of its literary advertisements and critical columns—another some retired magistrate or senator of easy fortune and indefatigable philanthropy, who devoted the rather oppressive leisure of an honourable old age to the promotion of patriotic ameliorations, the watchful guardianship of charities, and the ardent patronage of educational institutions.

The reader of his correspondence will find hints about various little matters connected with Scott's own advancing edifice, in which he may trace the President of the Royal Society and the Chairman of the Gas Company. But I cannot say that the "century of inventions" at Abbotsford turned out very happily. His bells to move by compression of air in a piston proved a poor succedaneum for the simple wire ; and his

application of gas-light to the interior of a dwelling-house was in fact attended with so many inconveniences, that ere long all his family heartily wished it had never been thought of. Moreover, he had deceived himself as to the expense of such an apparatus when constructed and maintained for the use of a single domestic establishment. The effect of the apparatus was at first superb. In sitting down to table, in Autumn, no one observed that in each of three chandeliers there lurked a tiny bead of red light. Dinner passed off, and the sun went down, and suddenly, at the turning of a screw, the room was filled with a gush of splendour worthy of the palace of Aladdin ; but, as in the case of Aladdin, the old lamp would have been better in the upshot. Jewelry sparkled, but cheeks and lips looked cold and wan in this fierce illumination ; and the eye was wearied, and the brow ached, if the sitting was at all protracted. I confess, however, that my chief enmity to the whole affair arises from my conviction that Sir Walter's own health was damaged, in his latter years, in consequence of his habitually working at night under the intense and burning glare of a broad star of gas.

In June *Quentin Durward* was published ; and surpassing as its popularity was eventually, Constable, who was in London at the time, wrote in cold terms of its immediate reception.

Very shortly before the bookseller left Edinburgh for that trip, he had concluded another bargain (his last of the sort) for the purchase of *Waverley* copyrights—acquiring the author's property in *The Pirate*, *Nigel*, *Peveiril*, and also *Quentin Durward*, out and out, at the price of five thousand guineas. He had thus paid for the copyright of novels (over and above the half profits of the early separate editions) the sum of £22,500 ; and his advances upon “works of fiction” still in embryo, amounted at this moment to £10,000 more. He began, in short, and the wonder is that he began so late, to suspect that the process of creation was moving too rapidly. The publication of different sets of the Tales in a collective shape may probably have had a share in opening his eyes to the fact, that the voluminousness of an author is anything but favourable to the rapid diffusion of his works as library books—the great object with any publisher who aspires at founding a solid fortune. But he merely intimated on this occasion that, considering the usual chances of life and health, he must decline contracting for any more novels until those already bargained for were written. Scott himself appears to have admitted for

a moment the suspicion that he had been overdoing the field of romance; and opened the scheme of a work on popular superstitions, in the form of dialogue, for which he had long possessed ample materials in his curious library of *diablerie*. But before Constable had leisure to consider this proposal in all its bearings, *Quentin Durward*, from being, as Scott expressed it, *frost-bit*, had emerged into most fervid and flourishing life. In fact, the sensation which this novel on its first appearance created in Paris, was extremely similar to that which attended the original *Waverley* in Edinburgh, and *Ivanhoe* afterwards in London. For the first time Scott had ventured on foreign ground, and the French public, long wearied of the pompous tragedians and feeble romancers, who had alone striven to bring out the ancient history and manners of their country in popular forms, were seized with a fever of delight when Louis XI. and Charles the Bold started into life again at the beck of the Northern Magician. The result of *Quentin Durward*, as regards the contemporary literature of the Continent, would open a field for ample digression. As concerns the author himself, the rays of foreign enthusiasm speedily thawed the frost of Constable's unwonted misgivings; the *Dialogues on Superstition*, if he ever began them, were very soon dropped, and the Novelist resumed his pen. He had not sunk under the short-lived frown—for he wrote to Ballantyne, on first ascertaining that a damp was thrown on his usual manufacture,

“The mouse who only trusts to one poor hole,
Can never be a mouse of any soul;”

and, while his publisher yet remained irresolute as to the plan of *Dialogues*, threw off his excellent Essay on Romance for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*; and I cannot but consider it as another display of his high self-reliance, that though he well knew to what influence *Quentin* owed its ultimate success in the British market, he, the instant he found himself encouraged to take up the trade of story-telling again, sprang back to Scotland—nay, voluntarily encountered new difficulties, by selecting the comparatively tame and unpicturesque realities of modern manners in his native province.

The month of August, 1823, was one of the happiest in Scott's life. Never did I see a brighter day at Abbotsford than that on which Miss Edgeworth first arrived there—never can I forget her look and accent when she was received by him

at his archway, and exclaimed, "Everything about you is exactly what one ought to have had wit enough to dream!" The weather was beautiful, and the edifice, and its appurtenances, were all but complete; and day after day, so long as she could remain, her host had always some new plan of gaiety. One day there was fishing on the Cauldshields Loch, and a dinner on the heathy bank. Another, the whole party feasted by Sir Thomas the Rhymer's waterfall in the glen—and the stone on which Maria that day sat was ever afterwards called *Edgeworth's Stone*. A third day we had to go further a-field. He must needs shew her, not Newark only, but all the upper scenery of the Yarrow, where "fair hangs the apple frae the rock,"—and the baskets were unpacked about sunset, beside the ruined Chapel overlooking St. Mary's Loch—and he had scrambled to gather blue-bells and heath-flowers, with which all the young ladies must twine their hair,—and they sang, and he recited, until it was time to go home beneath the softest of harvest moons. Thus a fortnight was passed—and the vision closed; for Miss Edgeworth never saw Abbotsford again during his life; and I am very sure she could never bear to look upon it now that the spirit is fled.

St. Ronan's Well was published in December, and in its English reception there was another falling off, which of course somewhat dispirited the bookseller for the moment. Scotch readers in general dissented stoutly from this judgment, alleging (as they might well do) that Meg Dods deserved a place by the side of Monkbarns, Bailie Jarvie, and Captain Dalgetty;—that no one, who had lived in the author's own country, could hesitate to recognise vivid and happy portraitures in Touchwood, Mac-Turk, and the recluse minister of St. Ronan's;—that the descriptions of natural scenery might rank with any he had given;—and, finally, that the whole character of Clara Mowbray, but especially its development in the third volume, formed an original creation, destined to be classed by posterity with the highest efforts of tragic romance. Some Edinburgh critics, however—(both talkers and writers)—received with considerable grudgings certain sarcastic sketches of the would-be-fine life of the watering-place—sketches which their Southern brethren had kindly suggested *might* be drawn from *Northern* observation, but could never appear better than fantastic caricatures to any person who had visited even a third-rate English resort of the same nominal class. There is no doubt that the author dashed off these minor personages with, in the painter's phrase, a *rich*

brush; but I must confess my belief that they have far more truth about them than his countrymen seemed at the time willing to allow; and that while the Continent was shut, as it was in the days of Sir Walter's youthful wanderings, a trip to such a sequestered place as Gilsland, or Moffat, or Innerleithen—(almost as inaccessible to London duns and bailiffs as the Isle of Man was then, or as Boulogne and Dieppe are now)—may have supplied the future novelist's note-book with authentic materials even for such worthies as Sir Bingo and Lady Binks, Dr. Quackleben, and Mr. Winterblossom. It should moreover be borne in mind, that during our insular blockade, northern watering-places were not alone favoured by the resort of questionable characters from the south. The comparative cheapness of living, and especially of education, procured for Sir Walter's "own romantic town" a constant succession of such visitants, so long as they could have no access to the *tables d'hôte* and dancing-masters of the Continent. When I first mingled in the society of Edinburgh, it abounded with English, broken in character and in fortune, who found a mere title (even a baronet's one) of consequence enough to obtain for them, from the proverbially cautious Scotch, a degree of attention to which they had long been unaccustomed nearer home; and I heard many name, when the novel was new, a booby of some rank, in whom they recognised a sufficiently accurate prototype for Sir Bingo.

Sir Walter had shewn a remarkable degree of good-nature in the completion of this novel. When the end came in view, James Ballantyne suddenly took vast alarm about a particular feature in the history of the heroine. In the original conception, and in the book as actually written and printed, Miss Mowbray's mock marriage had not halted at the profaned ceremony of the church; and the delicate printer shrunk from the idea of obtruding on the fastidious public the possibility of any personal contamination having been incurred by a high-born damsel of the nineteenth century. Scott was at first inclined to dismiss his friend's scruples as briefly as he had done those of Blackwood in the case of *The Black Dwarf*: "You would never have quarrelled with it," he said, "had the thing happened to a girl in gingham:—the silk petticoat can make little difference." James reclaimed with double energy, and called Constable to the rescue;—and after some pause, the author very reluctantly consented to cancel and re-write about twenty-four pages, which was enough to obliterate to a certain extent the dreaded scandal—and in a similar degree, as he always persisted,

to perplex and weaken the course of his narrative and the dark effect of its catastrophe.

Whoever might take offence with different parts of the book, it was rapturously hailed by the inhabitants of Innerleithen, who immediately identified the most striking of its localities with those of their own pretty village and picturesque neighbourhood, and foresaw in this celebration a chance of restoring the popularity of their long neglected *Well*;—to which Scott had occasionally escorted his mother and sister in the days of boyhood. The notables of the little town voted by acclamation that the old name of Innerleithen should be, as far as possible, dropped thenceforth, and that of St. Ronan's adopted. Nor were they mistaken in their auguries. An unheard-of influx of water-bibbers forthwith crowned their hopes; and spruce *hottles* and huge staring lodging-houses soon arose to disturb wofully every association that had induced Sir Walter to make Innerleithen the scene of a romance. Nor were they who profited by these invasions of the *genius loci* at all sparing in their demonstrations of gratitude;—the traveller reads on the corner of every new erection there, *Abbotsford Place*, *Waverley Row*, *The Marmion Hotel*, or some inscription of the like coinage.

Among other consequences of the revived fame of the place, a yearly festival was instituted for the celebration of *The St. Ronan's Border Games*. A club of *Bowmen of the Border*, arrayed in doublets of Lincoln green, with broad blue bonnets, and having the Ettrick Shepherd for Captain, assumed the principal management of this exhibition; and Scott was well pleased to be enrolled among them, and during several years was a regular attendant, both on the Meadow, where (besides archery) leaping, racing, wrestling, stone-heaving, and hammer-throwing, went on opposite to the noble old Castle of Traquair, and at the subsequent banquet, where Hogg in full costume always presided as master of the ceremonies. A gayer spectacle than that of *The St. Ronan's Games* in those days could not well have been desired. The Shepherd, even when on the verge of threescore, seldom failed to carry off some of the prizes, to the astonishment of his vanquished juniors; and the *bon-vivants* of Edinburgh mustered strong among the gentry and yeomanry of Tweeddale to see him afterwards in his glory filling the president's chair with eminent success, and commonly supported on this—which was, in fact, the grandest evening of his year—by Sir Walter Scott, Professor Wilson, Sir Adam Fergusson, and Peter Robertson.

CHAPTER XIII

Publication of *Redgauntlet*—Abbotsford completed—Marriage of Captain Scott—*Constable's Miscellany* projected—Life of Napoleon begun—*Tales of the Crusaders* published—Tour in Ireland—Visit to Windermere—Moore at Abbotsford—Rumours of Evil among the Booksellers. 1824-1825.

IMMEDIATELY on the conclusion of *St Ronan's Well*, Sir Walter began *Redgauntlet*;—but it had made considerable progress at press before Constable and Ballantyne could persuade him to substitute that title for *Herries*. The book was published in June, 1824, and was received at the time somewhat coldly, though it has since, I believe, found more justice. The reintroduction of the adventurous hero of 1745, in the dulness and dimness of advancing age and fortunes hopelessly blighted—and the presenting him—with whose romantic portraiture at an earlier period historical truth had been so admirably blended—as the moving principle of events, not only entirely, but notoriously imaginary—this was a rash experiment, and could not fail to suggest disadvantageous comparisons; yet, had there been no *Waverley*, I am persuaded the fallen and faded Ascanius of *Redgauntlet* would have been universally pronounced a masterpiece. About the secondary personages there could be little ground for controversy. What novel or drama has surpassed the grotesquely ludicrous, dashed with the profound pathos, of Peter Peebles—the most tragic of farces?—or the still sadder merriment of that human shipwreck, Nantie Ewart?—or Wandering Willie—and his Tale—the wildest and most rueful of dreams told by such a person, and in such a dialect? With posterity, even apart from these grand features, this novel will yield in interest to none of the series; for it contains perhaps more of Alan Fairford's personal experiences than any other of them, or even than all the rest put together.

This year—*mirabile dictu!*—produced but one novel; and it is not impossible that the author had taken deeply into his mind, though he would not *immediately* act upon them, certain hints about the danger of “overcropping,” which have been alluded to as dropping from his publishers in 1823. He had, however, a labour of some weight to go through in the second edition of his *Swift*. The additions to this reprint were numerous, and he corrected his notes, and the Life of the Dean throughout, with care. He also threw off several reviews and

other petty miscellanies—among the rest his memorable tribute to the memory of Lord Byron, written immediately after the news of the catastrophe at Missolonghi reached him.

The arrangement of his library and museum was, however, the main care of the summer ; and his woods were now in such a state that his most usual exercise out of doors was thinning them. He was an expert as well as powerful wielder of the axe, and competed with his ablest subalterns as to the paucity of blows by which a tree could be brought down. The wood rang ever and anon with laughter while he shared their labours ; and if he had taken, as he every now and then did, a whole day with them, they were sure to be invited home to Abbotsford, to sup gaily at Tom Purdie's. One of Sir Walter's transatlantic admirers, by the way, sent him a complete assortment of the tools employed in clearing the Back-woods, and both he and Tom made efforts to attain dexterity in using them ; but neither succeeded. The American axe, having a longer shaft than ours, and a much smaller and narrower cutting-piece, was, in Tom's opinion, only fit for paring a *kebbuck* (*i.e.* a cheese of skimmed milk). The old fashioned weapon was soon resumed, and the belt that bore it had accommodation also for a chisel, a hammer, and a small saw. Among all the numberless portraits, why was there not one representing the "Belted Knight," accoutred with these appurtenances of his forest-craft, jogging over the heather on a breezy morning, with Thomas at his stirrup, and Maida stalking in advance ?

Notwithstanding numberless letters to Terry about his upholstery, the far greater part of it was manufactured at home. The most of the articles from London were only models for the use of two or three neat-handed carpenters whom he had discovered in the villages near him ; and he watched and directed their operations as carefully as a George Bullock could have done ; and the results were such as even Bullock might have admired. The great table in the library, for example (a most complex and beautiful one), was done entirely in the room where it now stands, by Joseph Shillinglaw, of Darnick—the Sheriff planning and studying every turn as zealously as ever an old lady pondered the development of an embroidered cushion. The hangings and curtains, too, were chiefly the work of a little hunch-back tailor, by name *William Goodfellow*—(save at Abbotsford, where he answered to *Robin*)—who occupied a cottage on Scott's farm of the Broomieles ; one of the race who creep from homestead to homestead, welcomed wherever

they appear by housewife and handmaiden, the great gossips and newsmen of the parish,—in Scottish nomenclature *cardooers*. Proudly and earnestly did all these vassals toil in his service; and I think it was one of them that, when some stranger asked a question about his personal demeanour, answered in these simple words—"Sir Walter speaks to every man as if they were blood-relations." Not long after he had completed his work at Abbotsford, little Goodfellow fell sick, and as his cabin was near Chiefswood, I had many opportunities of observing the Sheriff's kind attention to him in his affliction. I can never forget the evening on which the poor tailor died. When Scott entered the hovel he found everything silent, and inferred from the looks of the good women in attendance that their patient had fallen asleep, and that they feared his sleep was the final one. He murmured some syllables of kind regret;—at the sound of his voice the dying tailor unclosed his eyes, and eagerly and wistfully sat up, clasping his hands with an expression of rapturous gratefulness and devotion, that, in the midst of deformity, disease, pain, and wretchedness, was at once beautiful and sublime. He cried with a loud voice, "The Lord bless and reward you!" and expired with the effort.

In the painting too Sir Walter personally directed everything. He abominated the commonplace daubing of walls, panels, doors, and window-boards, with coats of white, blue, or grey, and thought that sparklings and edgings of gilding only made their baldness and poverty more noticeable. Except in the drawing-room, which he abandoned to Lady Scott's taste, all the roofs were in appearance at least of antique carved oak, relieved by coats of arms duly blazoned at the intersections of beams, and resting on cornices to the eye of the same material, but composed of casts in plaster of Paris, after the foliage, the flowers, the grotesque monsters and dwarfs, and sometimes the beautiful heads of nuns and confessors, on which he had doated from infancy among the cloisters of Melrose and Roslin. In the painting of these things, also, he had instruments who considered it as a labour of love. The master-limner, in particular (Mr. D. R. Hay), had a devoted attachment to his person; and this was not wonderful, for he, in fact, owed a prosperous fortune to Scott's kind and sagacious counsel tendered at the very outset of his career. As a printer's apprentice, he had attracted notice by his attempts with the pencil, and Sir Walter was called upon, after often admiring his skill in representing dogs and horses and the like, to assist him

with his advice, as ambition had been stirred, and the youth would fain give himself to the regular training of an artist. Scott took him into his room, and conversed with him at some length. He explained the difficulties and perils of this aspiring walk ; and ended with saying, "It has often struck me that some clever fellow might make a good hit, if, in place of enrolling himself among the future Raphaels and Vandykes of the Royal Academy, he should resolutely set himself to introducing something of a more elegant style of house-painting."

Meantime, the progress of Abbotsford stimulated both friends and strangers to contribute articles of curiosity towards its adornment. Mr. Train's gift of this year was a handsome chair made from the oak of the house of Robroyston, the traditionary scene of the betrayal of Wallace by Monteith. This Sir Walter placed in his own *sanctum* : where there was no other chair but the one on which he sat at work. But the arrivals were endless : among the rest came, I think within the same week, a copy of Montfauçon's *Antiquities*, in fifteen volumes folio, richly bound in scarlet, the gift of King George IV., and a set of the *Variorum Classics*, in a hundred and forty volumes, together with a couple of really splendid carved chairs, the spoils of some Venetian palace, from Mr. Constable. These were his tokens of gratitude, by the way, for the MSS. of the Novels, which, on Lord Kinnedder's death, Scott drew from that friend's secret repositories, and transferred, with strict injunctions of watchfulness, to his delighted publisher.

Towards the close of this year, Sir Walter heard of the death of his dear brother Thomas, whose only son had been for some time domesticated at Abbotsford. In October, his own son Charles began his residence at Brazenose College, Oxford. The adoption of this plan implied finally dropping an appointment in the civil service of the East-India Company, which had been placed at his disposal by Lord Bathurst in 1820 ; a step which, were there any doubt on that subject, would alone be sufficient to prove that the young gentleman's father at this time considered his own worldly fortunes as in a highly prosperous situation. A writership in India is early independence ;—in the case of a son of Scott, so conducting himself as not to discredit the name he inherited, it could hardly have failed to be early wealth. And Sir Walter was the last man to deprive his boy of such safe and easy prospects of worldly advantage, turning him over to the precarious chances of a learned profession in Great Britain, unless in the confidence that his own resources were so

great as to render ultimate failure in such a career a matter of no primary importance.

By Christmas the *Tales of the Crusaders* were begun, and Abbotsford was at last rid of carpenters and upholsterers. Young Walter arrived to see his father's house complete, and filled with a larger company than it could ever before accommodate. One of the guests was Captain Basil Hall, always an agreeable one: a traveller and a *savant*, full of stories and theories, inexhaustible in spirits, curiosity, and enthusiasm. Sir Walter was surprised and a little annoyed on observing that the Captain kept a note-book on his knee while at table, but made no remark. He kindly allowed me, in 1836, to read his Abbotsford Diaries, etc., and make what use of them I might then think proper. On the present occasion I must give but a specimen:—

“On coming to a broad path in the middle of the woods, we took notice of a finger-post, on which was written ‘The Road to Selkirk.’ We made some remark about Tom’s orthography, upon which he laughed, and said that that finger-post had gained him great popularity in the neighbourhood. ‘I cannot say,’ he remarked, ‘that I had any such view when I ordered it to be put up. The public road, it is true, is not far off, and this leads through the very centre of my grounds, but I never could bring myself to make that a reason for excluding any person who finds it agreeable or advantageous to take over the hill if he likes. But although my practice in this respect had always been well known, the actual admission of it, the avowed establishment of it as a sort of right, by sticking up the finger-post, was received as a kind of boon, and I got a world of credit for a thing which had certainly not any popularity for its object. Nevertheless,’ he continued, ‘I have no scruple in saying that what I did deserved the good people’s acknowledgment; and I seriously disapprove of those proprietors who act on a different principle in these matters. Nothing on earth would induce me to put up boards threatening prosecution, or cautioning one’s fellow-creatures to beware of man-traps and spring-guns. I hold that all such things are not only in the highest degree offensive and hurtful to the feelings of people whom it is every way important to conciliate, but that they are also quite inefficient—and I will venture to say, that not one of my young trees has ever been cut, nor a fence trodden down, or any kind of damage done in consequence of the free access which all the world has to my place. Round the

house, of course, there is a set of walks set apart and kept private for the ladies—but over all the rest of my land any one may rove as he likes. I please myself with the reflection that many people of taste may be indulging their fancies in these grounds, and I often recollect how much of Burns's inspiration was probably due to his having near him the woods of Ballochmyle to ramble through at his will when he was a ragged callant.' Some one talked of the pains taken to provide the poor with receipts for making good dishes out of their ordinary messes. 'I dislike all such interference,' he said—'all your domiciliary, kind, impertinent visits;—they are all pretty much felt like insults, and do no manner of good: let people go on in their own way, in God's name. How would you like to have a nobleman coming to you to teach you how to dish up your beefsteak into a French kickshaw? Let the poor alone in their domestic habits: protect them, treat them kindly, trust them; but let them enjoy in quiet their dish of porridge, and their potatoes and herrings, or whatever it may be—for any sake don't torment them with your fashionable soups. And take care,' he added, 'not to give them anything gratis; except when they are under the gripe of immediate *misery*—what *they* think misery—consider it as a sin to do anything that can tend to make them lose the precious feeling of independence. For my part, I very very rarely give anything away. Now, for instance, this pile of branches which has been thinned out this morning, is placed here for sale for the poor people's fires, and I am perfectly certain they are more grateful to me for selling it at the price I do (which, you may be sure, is no great matter), than if I were to give them ten times the quantity for nothing. Every shilling collected in this and other similar manners, goes to a fund which pays the doctor for his attendance on them when they are sick; and this is my notion of charity.'—'I make not a rule to be on intimate terms,' he told us, 'with all my neighbours—that would be an idle thing to do. Some are good—some not so good, and it would be foolish and ineffectual to treat all with the same cordiality; but to live in harmony with all is quite easy, and surely very pleasant. Some of them may be rough and *gruff* at first, but all men, if kindly used, come about at last, and by going on gently, and never being eager or noisy about what I want, and letting things glide on leisurely, I always find in the end that the object is gained on which I have set my heart, either by exchange or purchase, or by some sort of compromise by which both parties are obliged,

and good-will begot if it did not exist before—strengthened if it did exist.’—I have never seen any person on more delightful terms with his family. The youngest of his nephews and nieces can joke with him, and seem at all times perfectly at ease in his presence—his coming into the room only increases the laugh, and never checks it—he either joins in what is going on or passes. No one notices him any more than if he were one of themselves. These are things which cannot be got up.”

Another entry says: “Last night there was a dance in honour of Sir Walter Scott’s eldest son, who had recently come from Sandhurst College, after having passed through some military examinations with great credit. We had a great clan of Scotts. There were no less than nine Scotts of Harden, and ten of other families. There were others besides from the neighbourhood—at least half a dozen Fergussons, with the jolly Sir Adam at their head—Lady Fergusson, her niece Miss Jobson, the pretty heiress of Lochore,” etc. But with all his acuteness, Hall does not seem to have caught any suspicion of the real purpose and meaning of this ball. That evening was one of the very proudest and happiest in Scott’s brilliant existence. Its festivities were held in honour of the young lady, whom the Captain names cursorily as “the pretty heiress of Lochore.” It was known to not a few of the party, and I should have supposed it might have been surmised by the rest, that those halls were displayed for the first time in all their splendour, on an occasion not less interesting to the Poet than the conclusion of a treaty of marriage between the heir of his name and fortunes, and the amiable niece of his friends Sir Adam and Lady Fergusson. It was the first regular ball given at Abbotsford, and the last. Nay, I believe nobody has ever danced under that roof since then. I myself never again saw the whole range of apartments thrown open for the reception of company except once—on the day of Sir Walter Scott’s funeral.

The lady’s fortune was a handsome one, and her guardians exerted the powers with which they were invested, by requiring that the marriage contract should settle Abbotsford (with reservation of Sir Walter’s own liferent) upon the affianced parties. To this condition he gave a ready assent, and the moment he had signed the deed, he exclaimed—“I have now parted with my lands with more pleasure than I ever derived from the acquisition or possession of them; and if I be spared for ten years, I think I may promise to settle as much more again upon

these young folks." It was well for himself and his children that his auguries, which failed so miserably as to the matter of worldly wealth, were destined to no disappointment as respected considerations of a higher description.

The marriage took place at Edinburgh on February 3rd, and when the young couple left Abbotsford two or three weeks afterwards, Sir Walter promised to visit them at their regimental quarters in Ireland in the course of the summer. Before he fulfilled that purpose he had the additional pleasure of seeing his son gazetted as Captain in the King's Hussars—a step for which Sir Walter advanced the large sum of £3,500.

In May, Terry, and his able brother comedian, Frederick Yates, entered on a negotiation, which terminated in their becoming joint lessees and managers of the Adelphi Theatre. Terry requested Scott and Ballantyne to assist him on this occasion by some advance of money, or if that should be inconvenient, by the use of their credit. They were both very anxious to serve him; but Sir Walter had a poor opinion of speculations in theatrical property; and, moreover, entertained suspicions, too well justified by the result, that Terry was not much qualified for conducting the pecuniary part of such a business. Ultimately Ballantyne, who shared these scruples, became Terry's security for a considerable sum (I think £500), and Sir Walter pledged his credit in like manner to the extent of £1,250. He had, in the sequel, to pay off both this sum and that for which the printer had engaged.

But at this time the chief subject of concern was a grand scheme of revolution in the whole art and traffic of publishing, which Constable first opened in detail one Saturday at Abbotsford—none being present except Sir Walter, Ballantyne, and myself. After dinner, there was a little pause of expectation, and the brave schemer suddenly started *in medias res*, saying: "Literary genius may, or may not, have done its best; but the trade are in the cradle." Scott eyed the florid bookseller's beaming countenance, and the solemn stare with which the equally portly printer was listening, and pushing round the bottles with a hearty chuckle, bade me "Give our two *sons:ie babbies* a drap mother's milk." Constable sucked in fresh inspiration, and proceeded to say that, wild as we might think him, certain new plans, of which we had all already heard some hints, had been suggested by, and were in fact mainly grounded upon, a sufficiently prosaic authority—namely, the annual schedule of assessed taxes, a copy of which interesting document

he drew from his pocket, and substituted for his *d'oyley*. It was copiously diversified, "text and margent," by figures and calculations in his own handwriting, which I for one might have regarded with less reverence, had I known at the time this "great arithmetician's" rooted aversion and contempt for all examination of his own balance-sheet. He had, however, taken vast pains to fill in the number of persons who might fairly be supposed to pay the taxes for each separate article of luxury, armorial bearings, hunters, racers, four-wheeled carriages, etc., etc., ; and having demonstrated that hundreds of thousands held, as necessary to their comfort and station, articles upon articles of which their forefathers never dreamt, said, that our self-love never deceived us more grossly than when we fancied our notions as to the matter of books had advanced in at all a corresponding proportion. "On the contrary," cried Constable, "I am satisfied that the demand for Shakspeare's plays, contemptible as we hold it to have been, in the time of Elizabeth and James, was more creditable to the classes who really indulged in any sort of elegance then, than the sale of *Childe Harold* or *Waverley* is to this nineteenth century."

Scott helped him on by interposing, that at that moment he had a rich valley crowded with handsome houses under his view, and yet much doubted whether any laird within ten miles spent ten pounds per annum on the literature of the day. "No," said Constable, "there is no market among them that's worth one's thinking about. They are contented with a review or a magazine, or at best with a paltry subscription to some circulating library forty miles off. But if I live for half-a-dozen years, I'll make it as impossible that there should not be a good library in every decent house in Britain as that the shepherd's ingle-nook should want the *saut poke*. Ay, and what's that?" he continued, warming and puffing; "why should the ingle-nook itself want a shelf for *the novels*?"—"I see your drift, my man," says Sir Walter;—"you're for being like Billy Pitt in Gilray's print—you want to get into the salt-box yourself."—"Yes," he responded (using a favourite adjuration)—"I have hitherto been thinking only of the wax lights, but before I'm a twelvemonth older I shall have my hand upon the tallow."—"Troth," says Scott, "you are indeed likely to be 'The grand Napoleon of the realms of *print*.'"—"If you outlive me," says Constable, with a regal smile, "I bespeak that line for my tomb-stone, but, in the meantime, may I presume to ask you to be my right-hand man when I open my campaign of

Marengo? I have now settled my outline of operations—a three shilling or half-crown volume every month, which must and shall sell, not by thousands or tens of thousands, but by hundreds of thousands—ay, by millions! Twelve volumes in the year, a halfpenny of profit upon every copy of which will make me richer than the possession of all the copyrights of all the quartos that ever were, or will be, hot-pressed!—twelve volumes, so good that millions must wish to have them, and so cheap that every butcher's callant may have them, if he pleases to let me tax him sixpence a-week!”

Many a previous consultation, and many a solitary meditation, too, prompted Scott's answer.—“Your plan,” said he, “cannot fail, provided the books be really good; but you must not start until you have not only leading columns, but depth upon depth of reserve in thorough order. I am willing to do my part in this grand enterprise. Often, of late, have I felt that the vein of fiction was nearly worked out; often, as you all know, have I been thinking seriously of turning my hand to history. I am of opinion that historical writing has no more been adapted to the demands of the increased circles among which literature does already find its way, than you allege as to the shape and price of books in general. What say you to taking the field with a *Life of the other Napoleon?*”

The reader does not need to be told that the series of cheap volumes, subsequently issued under the title of *Constable's Miscellany*, was the scheme on which this great bookseller was brooding. Before he left Abbotsford, it was arranged that the first number of this collection should consist of one half of *Waverley*; the second, of the first section of a *Life of Napoleon Bonaparte* by the author of *Waverley*; that this *Life* should be comprised in four of these numbers; and that, until the whole series of his novels had been issued, a volume every second month, in this new and uncostly form, he should keep the Ballantyne press going with a series of historical works, to be issued on the alternate months.

Some circumstances in the progress of the *Tales of the Crusaders*, now on the eve of publication, must have been uppermost in Scott's mind when he met Constable's proposals with so much alacrity. The story of *The Betrothed*—(to which he was mainly prompted by the lively conversation on Welsh antiquities of Archdeacon Williams)—found no favour as it advanced with Ballantyne; and so heavily did his critical remonstrances weigh on the author, that he at length determined to cancel it for

ever. The tale, however, all but a chapter or two, had been printed off, and both publisher and printer paused about committing such a mass to the flames. The sheets were hung up meanwhile, and Scott began *The Talisman*—of which also James criticised the earlier chapters in such a strain that Scott was deeply vexed. "Is it wise," he wrote, "to mend a dull overloaded fire by heaping on a shovelful of wet coals?" and hinted some doubts whether he should proceed. He did so, however; the critical printer by degrees warmed to the story, and he at last pronounced *The Talisman* such a masterpiece, that *The Betrothed* might venture abroad under its wing. Sir Walter was now reluctant on that subject, and said he would rather write two more new novels than the few pages necessary to complete his unfortunate *Betrothed*. But while he hesitated, the German newspapers announced "*a new romance by the author of 'Waverley'*" as about to issue from the press of Leipsic. There was some ground for suspecting that a set of the suspended sheets might have been purloined and sold to a pirate, and this consideration put an end to his scruples. And when the German did publish the fabrication, entitled *Walladmor*, it could no longer be doubtful that some reader of Scott's sheets had communicated at least the fact that he was breaking ground in Wales.

Early in June, then, the *Tales of the Crusaders* were put forth; and, as Mr. Ballantyne had predicted, the brightness of *The Talisman* dazzled the eyes of the million as to the defects of the twin-story. Few of these publications had a more enthusiastic greeting; and Scott's literary plans were, as the reader will see reason to infer, considerably modified in consequence of the new burst of applause which attended the brilliant procession of his *Saladin* and *Cœur de Lion*.

To return for a moment to our merry conclave at Abbotsford. Constable's vast chapter of embryo schemes was discussed more leisurely on the following Monday morning, when we drove to the crags of Smailholm and the Abbey of Dryburgh, both poet and publisher talking over the past and the future course of their lives, and agreeing, as far as I could penetrate, that the years to come were likely to be more prosperous than any they had as yet seen. In the evening, too, this being his friend's first visit since the mansion had been completed, Scott (though there were no ladies and few servants) had the hall and library lighted up, that he might shew him everything to the most sparkling advantage. With what serenity did he walk about those apart-

ments, handling books, expounding armour and pictures, and rejoicing in the Babylon which he had built !

He began, without delay, what was meant to be a very short preliminary sketch of the French Revolution, prior to the appearance of his hero upon the scene of action. This, he thought, might be done almost *currente calamo* ; for his recollection of all the great events as they occurred was vivid, and he had not failed to peruse every book of any considerable importance on these subjects as it issued from the press. He apprehended the necessity, on the other hand, of more laborious study in the way of reading than he had for many years had occasion for, before he could enter with advantage upon Buonaparte's military career ; and Constable accordingly set about collecting a new library of printed materials, which continued from day to day pouring in upon him, till his little parlour in Cast^{le} Street looked more like an auctioneer's premises than an author's. The first waggon delivered itself of about a hundred huge folios of the *Moniteur* ; and London, Paris, Amsterdam, and Brussels, were all laid under contribution to meet the bold demands of his purveyor.

In the meantime he advanced with his Introduction ; and, catching fire as the theme expanded before him, had so soon several chapters in his desk, without having travelled over half the ground assigned for them, that Constable saw it would be in vain to hope for the completion of the work within four duodecimos. They resolved that it should be published, in the first instance, as a separate book, in four volumes of the same size with the *Tales of the Crusaders*, but with more pages and more letterpress to each page. Scarcely had this been settled before it became obvious, that four such volumes would never suffice ; and the number was week after week extended—with corresponding alterations as to the rate of the author's payment. Constable still considered the appearance of the second edition of the *Life of Napoleon* in his *Miscellany* as the great point on which the fortunes of that undertaking were to turn ; and its commencement was in consequence adjourned ; which, however, must have been the case at any rate, as the stock of the Novels was greater than he had calculated ; and some interval must elapse, before, with fairness to the retail trade, he could throw that long series into any cheaper form.

Before the Court rose in July, Sir Walter had made considerable progress in his *Sketch of the French Revolution* ; but it was agreed that he should make his promised excursion

to Ireland before any MS. went to the printers. He had seen no more of the sister island than Dunluce and the Giant's Causeway; his curiosity about the scenery and the people was lively; and besides the great object of seeing his son and daughter-in-law under their own roof, and the scarcely inferior pleasure of another meeting with Miss Edgeworth, he looked forward to renewing his acquaintance with several accomplished persons who had been serviceable to him in his labours upon Swift.

Sir Walter and his original fellow-travellers started from Dublin for Holyhead on August 18th. Our progress through North Wales produced nothing worth recording, except perhaps the feeling of delight which everything in the aspect of the common people, their dress, their houses, their gardens, and their husbandry, could not fail to call up in persons who had just been seeing Ireland for the first time. Scott had, while at Edgeworthstown, been requested by Mr. Canning to meet him at his friend Mr. Bolton's, on Windermere. On reaching that lake, we spent a pleasant day with Professor Wilson at Elleray, and he then conducted us to Storrs. A large company had been assembled there in honour of the Minister—among others was Mr. Wordsworth. It has not, I suppose, often happened, to a plain English merchant, wholly the architect of his own fortunes, to entertain at one time a party embracing so many illustrious names. He was proud of his guests; they respected him, and honoured and loved each other; and it would have been difficult to say which star in the constellation shone with the brightest or the softest light. There was "high discourse," intermingled with as gay flashings of courtly wit as ever Canning displayed; and a plentiful allowance, on all sides, of those airy transient pleasantries, in which the fancy of poets, however wise and grave, delights to run riot when they are sure not to be misunderstood. There were beautiful and accomplished women to adorn and enjoy this circle. The weather was as Elysian as the scenery. There were brilliant cavalcades through the woods in the mornings, and delicious boatings on the Lake by moonlight; and the last day, "the Admiral of the Lake" presided over one of the most splendid regattas that ever enlivened Windermere. Perhaps there were not fewer than fifty barges following in the Professor's radiant procession, when it paused at the Point of Storrs to admit into the place of honour the vessel that carried kind and happy Mr. Bolton and his guests. The bards of the Lakes led the cheers

that hailed Scott and Canning ; and music and sunshine, flags, streamers, and gay dresses, the merry hum of voices, and the rapid splashing of innumerable oars, made up a dazzling mixture of sensations as the flotilla wound its way among the richly-foliaged islands, and along bays and promontories peopled with enthusiastic spectators.

On at last quitting Storrs, we visited Mr. Wordsworth at his charming retreat of Mount Rydal : and he thence accompanied us to Keswick, where we saw Mr. Southey in his unrivalled library. Mr. Wordsworth and his daughter then turned with us, and passing over Kirkstone to Ullswater, conducted us first to his friend Mr. Marshall's elegant villa, near Lyulph's Tower, and on the next day to the noble castle of his lifelong friend and patron Lord Lonsdale. The Earl and Countess had their halls filled with another splendid circle of distinguished persons. Sir Walter remained a couple of days, and perambulated, under Wordsworth's guidance, the superb terraces and groves of the "fair domain" which that poet has connected with the noblest monument of his genius. He reached Abbotsford again on September 1st, and said truly that "his tour had been one ovation."

About this time, being again a traveller, I lost the opportunity of witnessing his reception of several eminent persons ;—among others the late admirable Master of the Rolls, Lord Gifford, and his Lady—Dr. Phillpotts, now Bishop of Exeter ; and Mr. Thomas Moore. This last fortunately found Sir Walter in an interval of repose—no one with him at Abbotsford but Lady and Miss Scott—and no company at dinner except the Fergussons and Laidlaw. The two poets had thus the opportunity of a great deal of quiet conversation ; and from the hour they met, they seemed to have treated each other with a full confidence, the record of which, however touchingly honourable to both, could hardly be made public *in extenso* while one of them survives. The first day they were alone after dinner, and the talk turned chiefly on the recent death of Byron—from which Scott passed unaffectedly to his own literary history. Mr. Moore listened with great interest to details, now no longer new, about the early days of Matt Lewis, *The Minstrelsy*, and the Poems ; and "at last," says he, "to my no small surprise, as well as pleasure, he mentioned the novels, without any reserve, as his own. He gave me an account of the original progress of those extraordinary works, the hints supplied for them, the conjectures and mystification to which

they had given rise, etc. etc.:" he concluded with saying, "They have been a mine of wealth to me—but I find I fail in them now—I can no longer make them so good as at first." This frankness was met as it should have been by the brother poet; and when he entered Scott's room next morning, "he laid his hand," says Mr. Moore, "with a sort of cordial earnestness on my breast, and said—*Now, my dear Moore, we are friends for life.*" They sallied out for a walk through the plantations, and among other things, the commonness of the poetic talent in these days was alluded to. "Hardly a Magazine is now published," said Moore, "that does not contain verses which some thirty years ago would have made a reputation."—Scott turned with his look of shrewd humour, as if chuckling over his own success, and said, "Ecod, we were in the luck of it to come before these fellows;" but he added, playfully flourishing his stick as he spoke, "we have, like Bobadil, taught them to beat us with our own weapons."—"In complete novelty," says Moore, "he seemed to think, lay the only chance for a man ambitious of high literary reputation in these days."

Moore says—"I parted from Scott with the feeling that all the world might admire him in his works, but that those only could learn to love him as he deserved who had seen him at Abbotsford. I give you *carte blanche*, to say what you please of my sense of his cordial kindness and gentleness; perhaps a not very dignified phrase would express my feeling better than any fine one—it was that he was a *thorough good fellow.*" What Scott thought of his guest appears from this entry in a private note-book: "Tom Moore's is the most exquisite warbling I ever heard. . . . There is a manly frankness, with perfect ease and good-breeding, about him, which is delightful. Not the least touch of the poet or the pedant. A little—very little man—less, I think, than Lewis, and something like him in person; God knows, not in conversation, for Matt, though a clever fellow, was a bore of the first description. Moreover, he looked always like a schoolboy. Now Moore has none of this insignificance. His countenance is plain, but the expression so very animated, especially in speaking or singing, that it is far more interesting than the finest features could have rendered it. I was aware that Byron had often spoken of Moore and myself in the same breath, and with the same sort of regard; so I was curious to see what there could be in common betwixt us, Moore having lived so much

in the gay world, I in the country, and with people of business, and sometimes with politicians; Moore a scholar, I none; he a musician and artist, I without knowledge of a note; he a democrat, I an aristocrat—with many other points of difference; besides his being an Irishman, I a Scotchman, and both tolerably national. Yet there is a point of resemblance, and a strong one. We are both good-humoured fellows, who rather seek to enjoy what is going forward than to maintain our dignity as Lions; and we have both seen the world too widely and too well not to condemn in our souls the imaginary consequence of literary people, who walk with their noses in the air, and remind me always of the fellow whom Johnson met in an alehouse, and who called himself '*the great Twalmly—inventor of the flood-gate iron for smoothing linen.*' He also enjoys the *mot pour rire*, and so do I."

Towards the end of September I returned to Scotland from a visit to London on some personal business. During that visit I had heard a great deal more than I understood about the commercial excitement of the time. There had been several years of extravagant speculation. Even persons who had extensive and flourishing businesses in their hands, partook the general rage of infatuation. He whose own shop, counting-house, or warehouse, had been sufficient to raise him to a decent and safely-increasing opulence, and was more than sufficient to occupy all his attention, drank in the vain delusion that he was wasting his time and energy on things unworthy of a masculine ambition, and embarked the resources necessary for the purposes of his lawful calling, in schemes worthy of the land-surveyors of El Dorado. It was whispered that *the trade* (so called, *par excellence*) had been bitten with this fever; and persons of any foresight who knew the infinitely curious links by which booksellers, and printers, and paper-makers (and therefore authors) are bound together, for good and for evil, already began to prophesy that, whenever the general crash, which must come ere long, should arrive, its effects would be felt far and wide among all classes connected with the productions of the press. When it was rumoured that this great bookseller, or printer, had become a principal holder of South American mining shares—that another was the leading director of a gas company—while a third house had risked about £100,000 in a cast upon the most capricious of all agricultural products, *hops*—it was no wonder that bankers should begin to calculate balances, and pause upon discounts.

Among other hints were some concerning a bookselling establishment in London, with which I knew Constable to be closely connected. Little suspecting the extent to which any mischance of Messrs. Hurst and Robinson must involve Sir Walter's own responsibilities, I transmitted to him the rumours in question. Before I could have his answer, a legal friend told me that people were talking doubtfully about Constable's own stability. I thought it probable, that if Constable fell into any embarrassments, Scott might suffer the inconvenience of losing the copy-money of his last novel. Nothing more serious occurred to me. But I thought it my duty to tell him this whisper also ; and heard from him, almost by return of post, that, shake who might in London, his friend in Edinburgh was "rooted, as well as branched, like the oak."

A few days, however, after my arrival at Chiefswood, I received a letter from the legal friend already alluded to—(Mr. William Wright, the eminent barrister of Lincoln's Inn,—who, by the way, was also on terms of great personal familiarity with Constable, and liked *the Czar* exceedingly)—which renewed my apprehensions, or rather, for the first time, gave me any suspicion that there really might be something "rotten in the state of *Muscovy*." Mr. Wright informed me that it was reported in London that Constable's London banker had thrown up his book. This letter reaching me about five o'clock, I rode over to Abbotsford, and found Sir Walter alone over his glass of whisky and water and cigar—at this time, whenever there was no company, "his custom always in the afternoon." I gave him Mr. Wright's letter to read. He did so, and returning it, said, quite with his usual tranquil good-humour of look and voice, "I am much obliged to you for coming over ; but you may rely upon it Wright has been hoaxed. I promise you, were the Crafty's book thrown up, there would be a pretty decent scramble among the bankers for the keeping of it. There may have been some little dispute or misunderstanding, which malice and envy have exaggerated in this absurd style ; but I shan't allow such nonsense to disturb my *siesta*."

Seeing how coolly he treated my news, I went home relieved and gratified. Next morning, as I was rising, behold Peter Mathieson at my door, his horses evidently off a journey, and the Sheriff rubbing his eyes as if the halt had shaken him out of a sound sleep. I made what haste I could to descend, and found him by the side of the brook looking somewhat worn, but with a serene and satisfied countenance, busied already in help-

ing his little grandson to feed a fleet of ducklings.—“You are surprised,” he said, “to see me here. The truth is, I was more taken aback with Wright’s epistle than I cared *to let on*; and so, as soon as you left me, I ordered the carriage to the door, and never stopped till I got to Polton, where I found Constable putting on his nightcap. I stayed an hour with him, and I have now the pleasure to tell you that *all is right*. There was not a word of truth in the story—he is fast as Ben Lomond; and as Mamma and Anne did not know what my errand was, I thought it as well to come and breakfast here, and set Sophia and you at your ease before I went home again.”

We had a merry breakfast, and he chatted gaily afterwards as I escorted him through his woods, leaning on my shoulder all the way, which he seldom as yet did, except with Tom Purdie, unless when he was in a more than commonly happy and affectionate mood. But I confess the impression this incident left on my mind was not a pleasant one. It was then that I first began to harbour a suspicion, that if anything should befall Constable, Sir Walter would suffer a heavier loss than the non-payment of some one novel. The night journey revealed serious alarm. My wife suggested, as we talked things over, that his alarm had been, not on his own account, but Ballantyne’s, who, in case evil came on the great employer of his types, might possibly lose a year’s profit on them, which neither she nor I doubted must amount to a large sum—any more than that a misfortune of Ballantyne’s would grieve her father as much as one personal to himself. His warm regard for his printer could be no secret; we well knew that James was his confidential critic—his trusted and trustworthy friend from boyhood. Nor was I ignorant that Scott had a share in the property of Ballantyne’s *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*. That had been commonly reported before I was acquainted with them; and all doubt was removed at the time of the Queen’s trial in 1820, when they had some warm debates in my presence as to the side to be taken on that unhappy question. But that Sir Walter was, and had all along been James’s partner in the great printing concern, neither I, nor, I believe, any member of his family, had entertained the slightest suspicion prior to the coming calamities which were now “casting their shadows before.”

It is proper to add here, that the story about the banker’s throwing up Constable’s book was groundless. Sir Walter’s first guess as to its origin proved correct.

Till John Ballantyne’s death, as already intimated, the

pecuniary management of that firm had been wholly in his hands. Of his conduct in such business I need add no more ; the burden had since been on his surviving brother ; and I am now obliged to say that, though his deficiencies were of a very different sort from John's, they were, as respected his commercial career and connexions, great and unfortunate.

He had received the education, not of a printer, but of a solicitor ; and he never, to his dying day, had the remotest knowledge or feeling of what the most important business of a master-printer consists in. He had a fine taste for the effect of types—no establishment turned out more beautiful specimens of the art than his ; but he appears never to have understood that types need watching as well as setting. If the page looked handsome, he was satisfied. He had been instructed that on every £50 paid in his men's wages, the master-printer is entitled to an equal sum of gross profit ; and beyond this *rule of thumb* calculation, no experience could bring him to penetrate his *mystery*. In a word, James never comprehended that in the greatest and most regularly employed manufactory of this kind (or indeed of any kind) the profits are likely to be entirely swallowed up, unless the acting master keeps up a most wakeful scrutiny, from week to week, and from day to day, as to the machinery and the materials. So far was he from doing this, that during several of the busiest and most important years of his connexion with the establishment in the Canongate, he seldom crossed its doors. He sat in his own elbow-chair, in a comfortable library, situated in a different street—not certainly an idle man—quite the reverse, though naturally indolent—but the most negligent and inefficient of master-printers.

He was busy, indeed ; and inestimably serviceable to Scott was his labour ; but it consisted solely in the correction and revisal of proof-sheets. It is most true, that Sir Walter's hurried method of composition rendered it absolutely necessary that whatever he wrote should be subjected to far more than the usual amount of inspection required at the hands of a printer ; and it is equally so, that it would have been extremely difficult to find another man willing and able to bestow such time and care on his proof-sheets as they uniformly received from James. But this was, in fact, not the proper occupation of the man who was at the head of the establishment—who had undertaken the pecuniary management. In every other great printing-house that I have known anything about, there are

intelligent and well-educated men, called, technically, *readers*, who devote themselves to this species of labour, and who are, I fear, seldom paid in proportion to its importance. Dr. Goldsmith, in his early life, was such a *reader* in the printing-house of Richardson; but the author of *Clarissa* did not disdain to look after the presses and types himself, or he would never have accumulated the fortune that enabled him to be the liberal employer of *readers* like Goldsmith. In a letter addressed to John Ballantyne, when the bookselling-house was breaking up, Scott says: "One or other of you will need to be constantly in the printing-office *henceforth*; it is the sheet anchor." This was *ten* years after that establishment began. Thenceforth James, in compliance with this injunction, occupied, during many hours of every day, a cabinet within the premises in the Canongate; but whoever visited him there, found him at the same eternal business, that of a literator, not that of a printer. He was either editing his newspaper—or correcting sheets, or writing critical notes to the author of *Waverley*. Shakspeare, Addison, Johnson, and Burke, were at his elbow; but not the ledger. We may thus understand poor John's complaint, in what I may call his dying memorandum, of the "large sums abstracted from the bookselling house for the use of the printing-office." Yet that bookselling house was from the first a hopeless one; whereas, under accurate superintendence, the other ought to have produced the partners a dividend of from £2,000 to £3,000 a year, at the very least.

On the other hand, the necessity of providing some remedy for this radical disorder must very soon have forced itself upon the conviction of all concerned, had not John introduced his fatal enlightenment on the subject of facilitating discounts, and raising cash by means of accommodation-bills. Hence the perplexed *states* and *calendars*—the wildernesses and labyrinths of ciphers, through which no eye but that of a professed accountant could have detected any clue; hence the accumulation of bills and counter-bills drawn by both bookselling and printing-house, and gradually so mixed up with other obligations, that John died in utter ignorance of the condition of their affairs. The pecuniary detail then devolved upon James; and I fancy it will be only too apparent that he never made even one serious effort to master the formidable array of figures thus committed to his sole trust.

The reader has been enabled to trace from its beginnings the connexion between Constable and the two Ballantyne

firms. It has been seen how much they both owed to his interference on various occasions of pressure and alarm. But when he, in his over-weening self-sufficiency, thought it involved no mighty hazard to indulge his better feelings, as well as his lordly vanity, in shielding these firms from commercial dishonour, he had estimated but loosely the demands of the career of speculation on which he was himself entering. And by-and-by, when, advancing by one mighty plunge after another in that vast field, he felt in his own person the threatenings of more signal ruin than could have befallen them, this “Napoleon of the press”—still as of old buoyed up to the ultimate result of his grand operations by the most fulsome flatteries of imagination—appears to have tossed aside very summarily all scruples about the extent to which he might be entitled to tax their sustaining credit in requital. The Ballantynes, if they had comprehended all the bearings of the case, were not the men to consider grudgingly demands of this nature, founded on service so important; and who can doubt that Scott viewed them from a chivalrous altitude? It is easy to see, that the moment the obligations became reciprocal, there arose extreme peril of their coming to be hopelessly complicated. It is equally clear, that Scott ought to have applied on these affairs, as their complication thickened, the acumen which he exerted, and rather prided himself in exerting, on smaller points of worldly business, to the utmost. That he did not, I must always regard as the enigma of his personal history; but various incidents in that history, which I have already narrated, prove incontestably that he had never done so; and I am unable to account for this having been the case, except on the supposition that his confidence in the resources of Constable and the prudence of James Ballantyne was so entire, that he willingly absolved himself from all duty of active and thoroughgoing superinspection.

It is the extent to which the confusion had gone that constitutes the great puzzle. I have been told that John Ballantyne, in his hey-day, might be heard whistling for his clerk, John Stevenson (often alluded to in Scott’s correspondence as *True Jock*), from the *sanctum* behind the shop with, “Jock, you lubber, fetch ben a sheaf o’ stamps.” Such things might well enough be believed of that hair-brained creature; but how sober solemn James could have made up his mind, as he must have done, to follow much the same wild course whenever any pinch occurred, is to me, I must own, incomprehensible. The

books were kept at the printing-house ; and of course Sir Walter (who alone in fact had capital at stake) might have there examined them as often as he liked : but it is to me very doubtful if he ever once attempted to do so : and it is certain that they were *never balanced* during the latter years of the connexion. During several years it was almost daily my custom to walk home with Sir Walter from the Parliament-house, calling at James's on our way. For the most part I used to amuse myself with a newspaper or proof-sheets in the outer room, while they were closeted in the little cabinet at the corner ; and merry were the tones that reached my ear while they remained in colloquy. If I were called in, it was because James, in his ecstasy, must have another to enjoy the dialogue that his friend was improvising—between Meg Dods and Captain Mac-Turk, for example, or Peter Peebles and his counsel.

The reader may perhaps remember a page in a former chapter where I described Scott as riding with Johnny Ballantyne and myself round the deserted halls of the ancient family of Riddell, and remarking how much it increased the wonder of their ruin that the late baronet had kept “day-book and ledger as regularly as any *cheesemonger in the Grassmarket*.” It is nevertheless true, that Sir Walter kept from first to last as accurate an account of his own *personal* expenditure as Sir John Riddell could have done of his extravagant outlay on agricultural experiments. I could, I believe, place before my reader the sum-total of sixpences that it had cost him to ride through turnpike-gates during a period of thirty years. This was, of course, an early habit mechanically adhered to : but how strange that the man who could persist, however mechanically, in noting down every shilling that he actually drew from his purse, should have allowed others to pledge his credit, year after year, upon sheafs of accommodation paper, without keeping any efficient watch—without knowing any one Christmas, for how many thousands he was responsible as a printer in the Canongate !

This is sufficiently astonishing—and had this been all, the result must sooner or later have been sufficiently uncomfortable ; but it must be admitted that Scott could never have foreseen a step which Constable took in the frenzied excitement of his day of pecuniary alarm. Owing to the original habitual irregularities of John Ballantyne, it had been adopted as the regular plan between that person and Constable, that, whenever the latter

signed a bill for the purpose of the other's raising money among the bankers, there should, in case of his neglecting to take that bill up before it fell due, be deposited a counter-bill, signed by Ballantyne, on which Constable might, if need were, raise a sum equivalent to that for which he had pledged his credit. I am told that this is an usual enough course of procedure among speculative merchants; and it may be so. But mark the issue. The plan went on under James's management, just as John had begun it. Under his management also—such was the incredible looseness of it—the *counter-bills*, meant only for being sent into the market in the event of the *primary bills* being threatened with dishonour—these instruments of safeguard for Constable against contingent danger were allowed to lie uninquied about in Constable's desk, until they had swelled to a truly monstrous "sheaf of stamps." Constable's hour of distress darkened about him, and he rushed with these to the money-changers. And thus it came to pass, that, supposing Ballantyne and Co. to have at the day of reckoning, obligations against them, in consequence of bill transactions with Constable, to the extent of £25,000, they were legally responsible for £50,000.

It is not my business to attempt any detailed history of the house of Constable. The sanguine man had, almost at the outset of his career, been "lifted off his feet," in Burns's phrase, by the sudden and unparalleled success of *The Edinburgh Review*. Scott's poetry and Scott's novels followed: and had he confined himself to those three great and triumphant undertakings, he must have died in possession of a princely fortune. But his "appetite grew with what it fed on," and a long series of less meritorious publications, pushed on, one after the other, in the craziest rapidity, swallowed up the gains which, however vast, he never counted, and therefore always exaggerated to himself. Finally, what he had been to the Ballantynes, certain other still more audacious "Sheafmen" had been to him. Hurst, Robinson and Co. had long been his London correspondents; and he had carried on with them the same traffic in bills and counter-bills that the Canongate Company did with him—and upon a still larger scale. They had done what he did not—or at least did not to any very culpable extent: they had carried their adventures out of the line of their own business. It was they, for example, that must needs be embarking such vast sums in a speculation on hops! When ruin threatened them, they availed themselves of Constable's credit

without stint or limit—while he, feeling darkly that the net was around him, struggled and splashed for relief, no matter who might suffer, so he escaped! And Sir Walter Scott, sorely as he suffered, was too plainly conscious of the “strong tricks” he had allowed his own imagination to play, not to make merciful allowance for all the apparently monstrous things that I have now been narrating of Constable.

This was for him the last year of many things; among others, of Sibyl Grey and the Abbotsford Hunt. Towards the close of a hard run on his neighbour Gala’s ground, he ventured to leap the Catrail—that venerable relic of the days of

“Reged wide and fair Strath-Clyde.”

He was severely bruised and shattered; and never afterwards recovered the feeling of confidence, without which there can be no pleasure in horsemanship. He often talked of this accident with a somewhat superstitious mournfulness.

CHAPTER XIV

Ruin of the Houses of Constable and Ballantyne—Death of Lady Scott—Publication of *Woodstock*—Journey to London and Paris—Publication of the *Life of Napoleon*. 1825-1827.

JAMES BALLANTYNE says, in a paper dictated from his deathbed: “I need not here enlarge upon the unfortunate facility which, at the period of universal confidence and indulgence, our and other houses received from the banks. Suffice it to say that all our appearances of prosperity, as well as those of Constable, and Hurst and Robinson, were merely shadows, and that from the moment the bankers exhibited symptoms of doubt, it might have been easy to discover what must be the ultimate result. During weeks, and even months, however, our house was kept in a state of very painful suspense. The other two, I have no doubt, saw the coming events more clearly. I must here say, that it was one of Sir Walter’s weaknesses to shrink too much from looking evil in the face, and that he was apt to carry a great deal too far—‘sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.’ I do not think it was more than three weeks before the catastrophe that he became fully convinced it was impending—if indeed his feelings ever reached the length of conviction at all. Thus, at the last, his fortitude was very severely tried indeed.”

Mr. Ballantyne had never seen Scott's Diary, and its entries from November 20th, 1825 (when it begins), until the middle of January, 1826, are in perfect accordance with this statement. The first on the subject is in these terms : "Here is matter for a May morning, but much fitter for a November one. The general distress in the city has affected H. and R., Constable's great agents. Should they go, it is not likely that Constable can stand; and such an event would lead to great distress and perplexity on the part of J. B. and myself. Thank God, I have enough to pay more than 20s. in the pound, taking matters at the very worst. But much inconvenience must be the consequence. I had a lesson in 1814 which should have done good; but success and abundance erased it from my mind. But this is no time for journalising or moralising either. Necessity is like a surfaced cook-maid, and I a turn-spit she has flogged, ere now, till he mounted his wheel. If *Woodstock* can be out by January 25th it will do much,—and it is possible."

Thus he continued to labour on at his romance; from time to time arrested amidst his visions by some fresh omen of the coming reality: but after suggesting or concurring in the commercial measure that seemed feasible, immediately commanding his mind into oblivion of whatever must prevent his pursuance of the task that depended solely on himself. That down to December 14th he was far indeed from having brought home to himself anything like the extent of his danger, is clear enough from the step recorded in that day's entry—namely, his consenting to avail himself of the power he had retained of borrowing £10,000 on the lands of Abbotsford, and advancing that sum to the struggling houses. Ballantyne hints that in his opinion both Constable and his London agents must have foreseen more clearly the issue of the struggle; and it is certain that the only point in Constable's personal conduct which Scott afterwards considered himself entitled to condemn and resent, was connected with these last advances.

My residence had been removed to London before Sir Walter felt, or acknowledged, serious apprehensions: nor can I on this occasion quote his Diary so largely as would enable the reader to follow from day to day the fluctuations of hope, anxiety, and fear. I must limit myself to a few of what seem the most remarkable passages of that record. On December 18th he writes thus: "If things go badly in London, het magic wand of the Unknown will be shivered in his grasp.

He must then, faith, be termed the Too-well-known. The feast of fancy will be over with the feeling of independence. He shall no longer have the delight of waking in the morning with bright ideas in his mind, hasten to commit them to paper, and count them monthly, as the means of planting such scaurs and purchasing such wastes ; replacing dreams of fiction by other prospective visions of walks by

‘Fountain heads, and pathless groves ;
Places which pale passion loves.’

This cannot be ; but I may work substantial husbandry, *i.e.* write history, and such concerns. They will not be received with the same enthusiasm ; at least, I much doubt the general knowledge that an author must write for his bread, at least for improving his pittance, degrades him and his productions in the public eye. He falls into the second-rate rank of estimation :

‘While the harness sore galls, and the spurs his side goad :
The high-mettled racer’s a hack on the road.’

It is a bitter thought ; but if tears start at it, let them flow. My heart clings to the place I have created—there is scarce a tree on it that does not owe its being to me.—What a life mine has been !—half-educated, almost wholly neglected, or left to myself ; stuffing my head with most nonsensical trash, and undervalued by most of my companions for a time ; getting forward, and held a bold and a clever fellow, contrary to the opinion of all who thought me a mere dreamer ; broken-hearted for two years ; my heart handsomely pierced again—but the crack will remain till my dying day. Rich and poor four or five times ; once on the verge of ruin, yet opened a new source of wealth almost overflowing. Now to be broken in my pitch of pride, and nearly winged (unless good news should come :) because London chooses to be in an uproar, and in the tumult of bulls and bears, a poor inoffensive lion like myself is pushed to the wall. But what is to be the end of it ? God knows ; and so ends the catechism.—Nobody in the end can lose a penny by me—that is one comfort. Men will think pride has had a fall. Let them indulge their own pride in thinking that my fall will make them higher, or seem so at least. I have the satisfaction to recollect that my prosperity has been of advantage to many, and to hope that some at least will forgive my transient wealth on account of the innocence of my intentions, and my real wish to do good to the poor. Sad

hearts, too, at Darnick, and in the cottages of Abbotsford. I have half resolved never to see the place again. How could I tread my hall with such a diminished crest?—how live a poor indebted man where I was once the wealthy, the honoured? I was to have gone there on Saturday in joy and prosperity to receive my friends. My dogs will wait for me in vain. It is foolish—but the thoughts of parting from these dumb creatures have moved me more than any of the painful reflections I have put down. Poor things! I must get them kind masters! There may be yet those who, loving me, may love my dog because it has been mine. I must end these gloomy forebodings, or I shall lose the tone of mind with which men should meet distress. I feel my dogs' feet on my knees—I hear them whining and seeking me everywhere. This is nonsense, but it is what they would do could they know how things may be.—An odd thought strikes me—When I die, will the journal of these days be taken out of the ebony cabinet at Abbotsford, and read with wonder, that the well-seeming Baronet should ever have experienced the risk of such a hitch?—or will it be found in some obscure lodging-house, where the decayed son of chivalry had hung up his scutcheon, and where one or two old friends will look grave, and whisper to each other, 'Poor gentleman'—'a well-meaning man'—'nobody's enemy but his own'—'thought his parts would never wear out'—'family poorly left'—'pity he took that foolish title.' Who can answer this question?—Poor Will Laidlaw!—poor Tom Purdie!—such news will wring your hearts, and many a poor fellow's besides, to whom my prosperity was daily bread.

"Ballantyne behaves like himself, and sinks the prospect of his own ruin in contemplating mine. I tried to enrich him indeed, and now all—all is in the balance. He will have the *Journal* still, that is a comfort, for sure they cannot find a better editor. *They*—alas, who will *they* be—the *unbekannten obern** who may have to dispose of my all as they will? Some hard-eyed banker—some of these men of millions!—I have endeavoured to give vent to thoughts naturally so painful, by writing these notes—partly to keep them at bay by busying myself with the history of the French Convention. I thank God I can do both with reasonable composure. I wonder how Anne will bear such an affliction. She is passionate, but stout-hearted and courageous in important matters, though irritable in trifles. I am glad Lockhart and his wife are gone. Why? I cannot tell

* *Unbekannten obern*—unknown rulers.

—but I *am* pleased to be left to my own regrets, without being melted by condolences, though of the most sincere and affectionate kind.—*Half-past eight.* I closed this book under the impression of impending ruin. I open it an hour after (thanks be to God) with the strong hope that matters will be got over safely and honourably, in a mercantile sense. Cadell came at eight to communicate a letter from Hurst and Robinson, intimating they had stood the storm. I shall always think the better of Cadell for this—not merely because ‘his feet are beautiful on the mountains who brings good tidings,’ but because he shewed feeling—deep feeling, poor fellow. He, who I thought had no more than his numeration-table, and who, if he had had his whole counting-house full of sensibility, had yet his wife and children to bestow it upon—I will not forget this, if all keeps right. I love the virtues of rough-and-round men—the others are apt to escape in salt rheum, sal-volatile, and a white pocket handkerchief.

“*December 19.*—Ballantyne here before breakfast. He looks on last night’s news with confidence. Constable came in and sat an hour. The old gentleman is firm as a rock. He talks of going to London next week. But I must go to work.

“*December 21.*—Dined with James Ballantyne, and met R. Cadell, and my old friend Mathews the comedian. The last time I saw him before, he dined with me in company with poor Sir Alexander Boswell, who was killed within a week. I never saw Sir A. more. The time before was in 1815, when Gala and I were returning from France, and passed through London, when we brought Mathews down as far as Leamington. Poor Byron made an early dinner with us at Long’s, and a most brilliant day we had of it. I never saw Byron so full of fun, frolic, wit, and whim; he was as playful as a kitten. Well, I never saw *him* again. So this man of mirth, with his merry meetings, has brought me no luck. I could not help thinking, in the midst of the glee, what gloom had lately been over the minds of three of the company. What a strange scene if the surge of conversation could suddenly ebb like the tide, and show us the state of people’s real minds!

‘No eyes the rocks discover
Which lurk beneath the deep.’

Life could not be endured were it seen in reality. Things keep mending in London.

“*December 22.*—I wrote six of my close pages yesterday,

which is about twenty-four pages in print. What is more, I think it comes off twangingly. The air of *Bonnie Dundee* running in my head to-day, I wrote a few verses to it before dinner, taking the key-note from the story of Clavers leaving the Scottish Convention of Estates in 1688-9. I wonder if they are good. Ah, poor Will Erskine ! thou couldst and wouldst have told me. I must consult J. B., who is as honest as was W. E. But then, though he has good taste too, there is a little of *Big bow-wow* about it. Can't say what made me take a frisk so uncommon of late years as to write verses of free-will. I suppose the same impulse which makes birds sing when the storm has blown over.

"December 24.—Constable has a new scheme of publishing the works of the Author of *Waverley* in a superior style, at £1 1s. volume. He says he will answer for making £20,000 of this, and liberally offered me any share of the profits. I have no great claim to any, as I have only to contribute the notes, which are light work ; yet a few thousands coming in will be a good thing—besides the Printing Office. Constable, though valetudinary, and cross with his partner, is certainly as good a pilot in these rough seas as ever man put faith in.

"December 25.—*Abbotsford*.—Arrived here last night at seven. Our halls are silent compared to last year, but let us be thankful—*Barbarus has segetes ? Nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia*. There shall be no lack of wisdom. But come—*il faut cultiver notre jardin*. I will accept no invitation for dinner, save one to Newton-Don, and Mertoun to-morrow, instead of Christmas-Day. On this day of general devotion, I have a particular call for gratitude.

"January 14.—An odd mysterious letter from Constable, who has gone post to London. It strikes me to be that sort of letter which I have seen men write when they are desirous that their disagreeable intelligence should be rather apprehended than expressed. I thought he had been in London a fortnight ago, disposing of property to meet this exigence, and so I think he should. Well, I must have patience. But these terrors and frights are truly annoying. . . . A letter from J. B., mentioning Constable's journey, but without expressing much apprehension. He knows C. well, and saw him before his departure, and makes no doubt of his being able easily to extricate whatever may be entangled. I will not therefore make myself uneasy. I can help doing so surely, if I will. At least, I have given up cigars since the year began, and have now no wish to return to

the habit, as it is called. I see no reason why one should not, with God's assistance, shun noxious thoughts, which foretell evil, and cannot remedy it."

A few days after Sir Walter penned the last-quoted paragraph, Mr. Constable made his appearance in London. I saw him immediately. Having deferred his journey imprudently, he had performed it very rapidly; and this exertion, with mental excitement, had brought on a sharp access of gout, which confined him for a couple of days to his hotel in the Adelphi—*reluctantem draconem*. A more impatient spirit never boiled in a feverish frame. It was then that I received my first information of Sir W. Scott's implication as a partner in the firm of Ballantyne. It was then also for the first time, that I saw full swing given to the tyrannical temper of *the Czar*. He looked, spoke, and gesticulated like some hoary despot, accustomed to nothing but the complete indulgence of every wish and whim, against whose sovereign authority his most trusted satraps and tributaries had suddenly revolted—open rebellion in twenty provinces—confusion in the capital—treason in the palace. I will not repeat his haughty ravings of scorn and wrath. I listened to these with wonder and commiseration; nor were such feelings mitigated when, having exhausted his violence of vituperation against many persons of whom I had never before heard him speak but as able and trusted friends, he cooled down sufficiently to answer my question as to the practical business on which the note announcing his arrival in town had signified his urgent desire to take my advice. Constable told me that he had already seen one of the Hurst and Robinson firm, and that the storm which had seemed to be "blown over" had, he was satisfied, only been lulled for a moment to burst out in redoubled fury. If they went, however, he must follow. He had determined to support them through the coming gale as he had done through the last; and he had the means to do so effectually, provided Sir Walter Scott would stand by him heartily and boldly.

The first and most obvious step was to make large sales of copyrights; and it was not surprising that Constable should have formed most extravagant notions of the marketable value of the property of this nature in his possession. Every bookseller is very apt to do so. A manuscript is submitted to him; he inspects it with coldness and suspicion; with hesitation offers a sum for it; obtains it, and sends it to be printed. He has hardly courage to look at the sheets as they are thrown off; but the book is at last laid on his counter, and he from that

moment regards it with an eye of parental fondness. It is *his*; he considers it in that light quite as much as does the author, and is likely to be at least as sorely provoked by anything in the shape of hostile criticism. If this be the usual working of self-love or self-interest in such cases, what wonder that the man who had at his disposal (to say nothing of innumerable minor properties) the copyrights of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, a moiety of the *Edinburgh Review*, nearly all Scott's Poetry, the *Waverley Novels*, and the advancing *Life of Napoleon*—who had made, besides, sundry contracts for novels by Scott, as yet unwritten—and who seriously viewed his plan of the new *Miscellany* as in itself the sure foundation of a gigantic fortune—what wonder that the sanguine Constable should have laid to his soul the flattering unction, that he had only to display such resources in some quarter totally above the momentary pressure of *the trade*, and command an advance of capital adequate to relieve him and all his allies from these unfortunate difficulties about a few paltry “sheafs” of stamped paper? To be brief, he requested me to accompany him, as soon as he could get into his carriage, to the Bank of England, and support him (as a confidential friend of the Author of *Waverley*) in his application for a loan of from £100,000 to £200,000 on the security of the copyrights in his possession. It is needless to say that, without distinct instructions from Sir Walter, I could not take upon me to interfere in such a business as this. Constable, when I refused, became livid with rage. After a long silence, he stamped on the ground, and swore that he could and would go alone. I left him in stern indignation.

There was another scene of the same kind a day or two afterwards, when his object was to get me to back his application to Sir Walter to borrow £20,000 in Edinburgh, and transmit it to him in London. I promised nothing but to acquaint Scott immediately with his request, and him with Scott's answer. Sir Walter, ere the message reached him, had been candidly told by Constable's own partner that any further advances would be mere folly.

Constable lingered on, fluctuating between wild hope and savage despair, until, I seriously believe, he at last hovered on the brink of insanity. When he returned to Edinburgh, it was to confront creditors whom he knew he could not pay.

The reader may be curious to see what account Ballantyne's memorandum gives of that dark announcement on the morning of Tuesday the 17th. It is as follows: “On the evening of

the 16th, I received from Mr. Cadell a distinct message putting me in possession of the truth. I called immediately in Castle Street, but found Sir Walter had gained an unconscious respite by being engaged out at dinner. It was between eight and nine next morning that I made the final communication. No doubt he was greatly stunned—but, upon the whole, he bore it with wonderful fortitude. He then asked—‘Well, what is the actual step we must first take? I suppose we must do something?’ I reminded him that two or three thousand pounds were due that day, so that we had only to do what we must do—refuse payment—to bring the disclosure sufficiently before the world. He took leave of me with these striking words—‘Well, James, depend upon that, I will never forsake you.’”

In the course of that unhappy yet industrious week, Sir Walter's situation as Ballantyne's partner became universally known. Mr. Ballantyne, as an individual, had no choice but to resolve on the usual course of a commercial man unable to meet engagements: but Scott from the first moment determined to avoid, if by his utmost efforts it could be avoided, the necessity of participating in such steps. He immediately placed his whole affairs in the hands of three trustees (James Jollie, W.S., Alex. Monypenny, W.S., and John Gibson, W.S.), all men of the highest honour and of great professional experience; and declined every offer of private assistance. These were very numerous:—his eldest son and his daughter-in-law eagerly tendered the whole fortune at their disposal, and the principal banks of Edinburgh, especially the house of Sir William Forbes and Co., which was the one most deeply involved in Ballantyne's obligations, sent partners of the first consideration, who were his personal friends, to offer liberal additional accommodation. What, I think, affected him most of all, was a letter from Mr. Poole, his daughters' harp-master, offering £500,—“probably,” says the Diary, “his all.” From London, also, he received various kind communications. Among others, one tendering an instant advance of £30,000—a truly munificent message, conveyed through a distinguished channel, but the source of which was never revealed to him, nor to me until some years after his death, and even then under conditions of secrecy. To all, his answer was the same. And within a few days he had reason to believe that the creditors would, as a body, assent to let things go in the course which he and his trustees suggested.

There soon, however, emerged new difficulties. It would

indeed have been very wonderful if all the creditors of three companies, whose concerns were inextricably intertangled, had at once adopted the views of the meeting, composed entirely of eminent citizens of Edinburgh, over which Sir William Forbes presided on January 26th ; nor, it is proper to add, was Scott himself aware, until some days later, of the extent to which the debts of the two houses of Constable and Hurst exceeded their assets ; circumstances necessarily of the greatest importance to the holders of Ballantyne's paper. In point of fact, it turned out that the obligations of the three firms had, by what is termed cross-rankings, reached respectively sums far beyond the calculations of any of the parties. On the full revelation of this state of things, some of the printers' creditors felt great disinclination to close with Scott's proposals ; and there ensued a train of harassment, the detail of which must be left in his Diary, but which was finally terminated according to his own original, and really most generous suggestion.

The day of calamity revealed the fact that James Ballantyne personally possessed no assets whatever. The claims against Sir Walter, as the sole really responsible partner in the printing firm, and also as an individual, settled into a sum of about £130,000. On much heavier debts Constable and Co. paid ultimately 2s. 9d. in the pound ; Hurst and Robinson about 1s. 3d. The Ballantyne firm had as yet done nothing to prevent their following the same line of conduct. It might still have allowed itself (and not James Ballantyne merely as an individual) to be declared bankrupt, and obtained a speedy discharge, like these booksellers, from all its obligations. But for Scott's being a partner, the whole affair must have been settled in a very short time. If he could have at all made up his mind to let commercial matters take the usual commercial course, the creditors of the firm would have brought into the market whatever property, literary or otherwise, Scott at the hour of failure possessed ; they would have had a right to his liferent of Abbotsford, among other things—and to his reversionary interest in the estate, in case either his eldest son or his daughter-in-law should die without leaving issue, and thus void the provisions of their marriage-contract. All this being disposed of, the result would have been a dividend very far superior to what the creditors of Constable and Hurst received ; and in return, the partners in the printing firm would have been left at liberty to reap for themselves the profits of their future exertions. Things were, however, complicated in

consequence of the transfer of Abbotsford in January, 1825. Some creditors now had serious thoughts of contesting the validity of that transaction ; but a little reflection and examination satisfied them that nothing could be gained by such an attempt. On the other hand, Sir Walter felt that he had done wrong in placing any part of his property beyond the reach of his creditors, by entering into that marriage-contract without a previous most deliberate examination into the state of his responsibilities. He must have felt in this manner, though I have no sort of doubt, that the result of such an examination in January, 1825, if accompanied by an instant calling in of all *counter-bills*, would have been to leave him at perfect liberty to do all that he did upon that occasion. However that may have been, and whatever may have been his delicacy respecting this point, he persisted in regarding the embarrassment of his commercial firm with the feelings not of a merchant but of a gentleman. He thought that by devoting the rest of his life to the service of his creditors, he could, in the upshot, pay the last farthing he owed them. They (with one or two exceptions) applauded his honourable intentions and resolutions, and partook, to a certain extent, in the self-reliance of their debtor. Nor had they miscalculated as to their interest. Nor had Sir Walter calculated wrongly. He paid the penalty of health and life, but he saved his honour and his self-respect :—

“The glory dies not, and the grief is past.” *

It was by-and-by settled that he should be left in the undisturbed possession of Abbotsford, on his pledging himself to dispose immediately of all his other property, of what kind soever, for the behoof of the creditors—to limit his personal expenses henceforth within his official salary—and, continuing his literary labour with his best diligence, to pay in all its profits until the debt should be wholly obliterated. Excepting from a single London Jew, a creditor originally of Hurst's, no practical interference with this arrangement was ever subsequently threatened. Scott, meanwhile, laboured on at his desk. In the very darkest period of his anxieties, he not only continued his novel and his *Buonaparte* but threw off his graceful and humorous, as well as sagacious and instructive review of *Pepys' Diary* : and before that was published, he had also most effectually displayed his self-possession by a political demonstration under a new but thin disguise.

* Sonnet on Scott's death, by Sir E. Brydges.

As soon as Parliament met, the recent convulsion in the commercial world became the subject of some very remarkable debates in the Lower House; and the Ministers, tracing it mainly to the rash facility of bankers in yielding credit to speculators, proposed to strike at the root of the evil by taking from private banks the privilege of circulating their own notes as money, and limiting even the Bank of England to the issue of notes of £5 value and upwards. The Government designed that this regulation should apply to Scotland as well as England; and the northern public received the announcement with almost universal reprobation. The Scotch banks apprehended a most serious curtailment of their profits; and the merchants and traders of every class were well disposed to back them in opposing the Ministerial innovation. Scott, ever sensitively jealous as to the interference of English Statesmen with the internal affairs of his native kingdom, took the matter up with as much zeal as he could have displayed against the Union had he lived in the days of Queen Anne. His national feelings may have been somewhat stimulated, perhaps, by his deep sense of gratitude for the generous forbearance which several Edinburgh banking-houses had just been exhibiting toward himself; and I think it need not be doubted, moreover, that the *splendida bilis* which, as the Diary confesses, his own misfortunes had engendered, demanded some escape-valve. Hence the three *Letters of Malachi Malagrowther*, which appeared first in *The Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, and were afterwards collected into a pamphlet by the late Mr. Blackwood, who, on that occasion, for the first time, had justice done to his personal character by "the Black Hussar of Literature."

When the Court of Session was to rise for the spring vacation Scott had to take farewell of his house in Castle Street. Henceforth, his family were to stay always, as he designed, in the country—and a small hired lodging was to suffice for himself when his duty called him to be in Edinburgh.

Sir Walter's Diary now begins to be clouded with a darker species of distress than mere loss of wealth could bring to his spirit. His darling grandson is sinking at a distance from him under incurable disease. At home the misfortunes against which his manhood struggled with stern energy were encountered by his affectionate wife under the disadvantages of enfeebled health; and it seems but too evident that mental pain and mortification had a great share in hurrying her ailments to a fatal end. Nevertheless, all his afflictions do not seem to have

interrupted for more than a day or two his usual course of labour. With rare exceptions he appears, all through this trying period, to have finished his daily task—thirty printed pages of *Woodstock*—until that novel was completed; or, if he paused in it, he gave a similar space of time to some minor production; such as his paper on *The Life of Kemble*. He also corresponded much as usual (notwithstanding all he says about indolence on that score) with his absent friends; and I need scarcely add, that his duties as Sheriff claimed many hours every week. The picture of resolution and industry which this portion of his Journal presents, is certainly as remarkable as the boldest imagination could have conceived.

The price received for *Woodstock* (£8,228) shews what eager competition had been called forth among the booksellers, when, after the lapse of several years, Constable's monopoly of Sir Walter's novels was abolished by their common calamity. The interest excited, not only in Scotland and England, but all over civilised Europe, by the news of Scott's misfortunes, must also have had its influence in quickening this commercial rivalry. The reader need hardly be told, that the first meeting of James Ballantyne and Company's creditors witnessed the transformation, a month before darkly prophesied, of the "Great Unknown" into the "Too-well-known." Even for those who had long ceased to entertain any doubt as to the main source at least of the *Waverley* romances, there would have been something stirring in the first confession of the author; but it in fact included the avowal, that he had stood alone in the work of creation; and when the mighty claim came in the same breath with the announcement of personal ruin, the effect on the community of Edinburgh was electrical. It is, in my opinion, not the least striking feature in his Diary, that it contains no allusion (save the ominous one of December 18th) to this long withheld revelation. He notes his painful anticipation of returning to the Parliament-House—*monstrari digito*—as an insolvent. It does not seem even to have occurred to him, that when he appeared there the morning after his creditors had heard his confession, there could not be many men in the place but must gaze on his familiar features with a mixture of curiosity, admiration, and sympathy, of which a hero in the moment of victory might have been proud—which might have swelled the heart of a martyr as he was bound to the stake. The universal feeling was, I believe, much what the late amiable and accomplished Earl of Dudley expressed to Mr. Morritt when

these news reached them at Brighton.—“Scott ruined!” said he, “the Author of *Waverley* ruined! Good God! let every man to whom he has given months of delight give him a sixpence, and he will rise to-morrow morning richer than Rothschild!”

His Diary shews that he very soon began another work of fiction; and that he from the first designed the *Chronicles of the Canongate* to be published by Mr. Robert Cadell. That gentleman’s connexion with Constable was, from circumstances of which the reader may have traced various little indications, not likely to be renewed after the catastrophe of their old copartnership. They were now endeavouring to establish themselves in separate businesses; and each was, of course, eager to secure the countenance of Sir Walter. He did not hesitate a moment. In the prudence at least of the senior there could no longer be any confidence; and Cadell’s frank conduct in warning him against Constable’s last mad proposal about a guarantee for £20,000, had produced a stronger impression.

The progress of the domestic story will be best given by a few extracts from the Diary:—

“May 11.—Charlotte was unable to take leave of me, being in a sound sleep, after a very indifferent night. Perhaps it was as well. Emotion might have hurt her; and nothing I could have expressed would have been worth the risk. I have foreseen, for two years and more, that this menaced event could not be far distant. I have seen plainly, within the last two months, that recovery was hopeless. And yet to part with the companion of twenty-nine years, when so very ill—that I did not, could not foresee. It withers my heart to think of it, and to recollect that I can hardly hope again to seek confidence and counsel from that ear to which all might be safely confided.”

His niece Miss Anne Scott (daughter of Thomas) had kindly arrived before he was thus forced to quit the scene, and repair alone to his new lodgings in Edinburgh:—“*Diary—Mrs. Brown’s Lodgings, North St. David Street.*—May 14.—A fair good-morrow to you, Mr. Sun, who are shining so brightly on these dull walls. Methinks you look as if you were looking as bright on the banks of the Tweed; but look where you will, Sir Sun, you look upon sorrow and suffering.—Hogg was here yesterday in danger, from having obtained an accommodation of £100 from James Ballantyne, which he is now obliged to repay. I am unable to help the poor fellow, being obliged

to borrow myself. But I long ago remonstrated against the transaction at all, and gave him £50 out of my pocket to avoid granting the accommodation,—but it did no good.

'May 15.—Received the melancholy intelligence that all is over at Abbotsford.

"*Abbotsford, May 16.*—She died at nine in the morning, after being very ill for two days—easy at last. I arrived here late last night. Anne is worn out, and has had hysterics, which returned on my arrival. Her broken accents were like those of a child—the language as well as the tones broken, but in the most gentle voice of submission. 'Poor mamma—never return again—gone for ever—a better place.' Then, when she came to herself she spoke with sense, freedom, and strength of mind, till her weakness returned. It would have been inexpressibly moving to me as a stranger—what was it then to the father and the husband? For myself, I scarce know how I feel—sometimes as firm as the Bass Rock, sometimes as weak as the water that breaks on it. I am as alert at thinking and deciding as I ever was in my life. Yet, when I contrast what this place now is, with what it has been not long since, I think my heart will break. Lonely, aged, deprived of my family—all but poor Anne; an impoverished, an embarrassed man, deprived of the sharer of my thoughts and counsels, who could always talk down my sense of the calamitous apprehensions which break the heart that must bear them alone.—Even her foibles were of service to me, by giving me things to think of beyond my weary self-reflections.

"I have seen her. The figure I beheld is, and is not, my Charlotte—my thirty years' companion. There is the same symmetry of form, though those limbs are rigid which were once so gracefully elastic—but that yellow masque, with pinched features, which seems to mock life rather than emulate it,—can it be the face that was once so full of lively expression? I will not look on it again. Anne thinks her little changed, because the latest idea she had formed of her mother is as she appeared under circumstances of extreme pain—mine go back to a period of comparative ease. If I write long in this way, I shall write down my resolution, which I should rather write up if I could. I wonder how I shall do with the large portion of thoughts which were hers for thirty years. I suspect they will be hers yet, for a long time at least. But I will not blaze cambric and crape in the public eye like a disconsolate widower, that most affected of all characters.

"*September 12.*—I begin to fear *Nap.* will swell to seven volumes.—As I slept for a few minutes in my chair, to which I am more addicted than I could wish, I heard, as I thought, my poor wife call me by the familiar name of fondness which she gave me. My recollections on waking were melancholy enough. These be

'The airy tongues that syllable men's names.'

"*September 13.*—Wrote my task in the morning, and thereafter had a letter from the sage Privy Councillor ——. He proposes to me that I should propose to the — of —, and offers his own right honourable intervention to bring so beautiful a business to bear. I am struck dumb—absolutely mute and speechless—and how to prevent him making me farther a fool is not easy, for he has left me no time to assure him of the absurdity of what he proposes; and if he should ever hint at such a piece of d—d impertinence, what must the lady think of my conceit or of my feelings! I will write to his present quarters, however, that he may, if possible, have warning not to continue this absurdity."

Lady Scott had not been quite four months dead, and the entry of the preceding day shews how extremely ill-timed was this communication, from a gentleman with whom Sir Walter had never had any intimacy. In October he resolved to make a journey to London and Paris, in both which capitals he had reason to expect important materials would be submitted to him as the biographer of Napoleon.

His expedition was a very seasonable relief; nor was he disappointed as to its direct object. By the kindness of Earl Bathurst, Colonial Secretary of State, and the Under-secretaries, Mr. Wilmot Horton and Mr. Robert Hay (who were all attached friends of his), he had access to many unpublished documents preserved in Downing Street, and copious extracts were prepared under his directions. The Duke of Wellington was good enough to give him a MS. commentary of his own on the Russian campaign, and many hours of confidential conversation respecting other parts of Buonaparte's military history. At Paris he was treated with equal kindness by Marshal Macdonald, with whom he had become acquainted a few years before, when the Marshal visited his paternal kindred in Scotland; among others, Sir Walter's constant friend, Hector M'Donald Buchanan. In both cities he was received with the

most marked attention. The deep and respectful sympathy with which his misfortunes, and gallant behaviour under them, had been regarded by all classes of men at home and abroad, was brought home to his perception in a way not to be mistaken. Finally, he had the satisfaction of settling his son Charles's destiny: the King personally undertaking that as soon as he had graduated at Oxford, he should be launched in the diplomatic service.

Sir Walter returned from Paris about the middle of the ensuing month. On proceeding to Edinburgh to resume his official duties, he established himself in a furnished house in Walker Street, it being impossible for him to leave his daughter alone in the country, and the aspect of his affairs being so much ameliorated that he did not think it necessary to carry the young lady to such a place as Mrs. Brown's lodgings. During the six ensuing months, however, he led much the same life of toil and seclusion from company which that of Abbotsford had been during the preceding autumn—very rarely dining abroad, except with one or two intimate friends, *en famille*—still more rarely receiving even a single guest at home: all the while, in fact, he suffered great pain (enough to have disturbed effectually any other man's labours, whether official or literary) from successive attacks of rheumatism, which seems to have been fixed on him by the wet sheets of one of his French inns; and his Diary contains, besides, various indications that his constitution was already shaking under the fatigue to which he had subjected it. Formerly, however great the quantity of work he put through his hands, his evenings were almost always reserved for the light reading of an elbow-chair, or the enjoyment of his family and friends. Now he seemed to grudge every minute that was not spent at the desk. The little that he read of new books, or for mere amusement, was done by snatches in the course of his meals; and to walk, when he could walk at all, to the Parliament-House, and back again, through the Prince's Street Gardens, was his only exercise and his only relaxation. Every ailment, of whatever sort, ended in aggravating his lameness; and, perhaps, the severest test his philosophy encountered was the feeling of bodily helplessness that from week to week crept upon him. The winter, to make bad worse, was a very cold and stormy one. The growing sluggishness of his blood shewed itself in chilblains, not only on the feet but the fingers, and his handwriting becomes more and more cramped and confused.

He spent a few days at Abbotsford at Christmas, and several weeks during the spring vacation ; but the frequent Saturday excursions were now out of the question—if for no other reason, on account of the quantity of books which he must have by him while working at his *Napoleon*. He says on December 30th : “Wrote hard. Last day of an eventful year ; much evil—and some good, but especially the courage to endure what Fortune sends, without becoming a pipe for her fingers. It is *not* the last day of the year ; but to-morrow being Sunday, we hold our festival to-day. The Fergussons came, and we had the usual appliances of mirth and good cheer. Yet our party, like the chariot-wheels of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, dragged heavily.—It must be allowed that the regular recurrence of annual festivals among the same individuals has, as life advances, something in it that is melancholy. We meet like the survivors of some perilous expedition, wounded and weakened ourselves, and looking through diminished ranks to think of those who are no more. Or they are like the feasts of the Caribs, in which they held that the pale and speechless phantoms of the deceased appeared and mingled with the living. Yet where shall we fly from vain repining ?—or why should we give up the comfort of seeing our friends, because they can no longer be to us, or we to them, what we once were to each other ?”

During the early months of 1827, however, he executed various minor tracts also : for *The Quarterly Review*, an article on “Mackenzie’s Life and Works of John Home, author of *Douglas*,” which is, in fact, a rich chapter of Scott’s own early reminiscences, and gives many interesting sketches of the literary society of Scotland in the age of which Mackenzie was the last honoured relic ;—and for *The Foreign Quarterly Review*, then newly started under the editorship of Mr. R. P. Gillies, an ingenious and elaborate paper on the writings of the German novelist Hoffman. This article, it is proper to observe, was a benefaction to Mr. Gillies, whose pecuniary affairs rendered such assistance very desirable. Scott’s generosity in this matter—for it was exactly giving a poor brother author £100 at the expense of considerable time and drudgery to himself—I think it necessary to mention ; the date of the exertion requires it of me. But such, in fact, had been in numberless instances his method of serving literary persons who had little or no claim on him, except that they were of that class. I have not conceived it delicate to specify many things of this kind ; but

I am at liberty to state, that when he wrote his first article for the *Encyclopædia* Supplement, and the editor of that work, Mr. Macvey Napier (a Whig in politics, and with whom he had hardly any personal acquaintance), brought him £100 as his remuneration, Sir Walter said—"Now tell me frankly, if I don't take this money, does it go into your pocket or your publisher's? for it is impossible for me to accept a penny of it from a literary brother." Mr. Napier assured him that the arrangements of the work were such, that the editor had nothing to do with the fund destined for contributions. Scott then pocketed his due, with the observation, that "he had trees to plant, and no conscience as to the purse of his fat friend"—to wit, Constable.

At this period, the Edinburgh Diary very seldom mentions anything that could be called a dinner-party. Skene he often styles "his good Samaritan:" he was now the usual companion of whatever walks he was willing or able to indulge in. He and his daughter partook generally once in every week of the family meal of Mr. and Mrs. Skene; and they did the like occasionally with a few other old friends, chiefly those of the Clerk's table. When an exception occurs, it is easy to see that the scene of social gaiety was doubly grateful from its rarity. Thus one entry, referring to a party at Mr. J. A. Murray's,* says—"met Jeffrey, Cockburn, Rutherford, and others of that file. Very pleasant—capital good cheer and excellent wine—much laugh and fun. I do not know how it is, but when I am out with a party of my Opposition friends, the day is often merrier than when with our own set. Is it because they are cleverer? Jeffrey and Harry Cockburn are to be sure very extraordinary men; yet it is not owing to that entirely. I believe both parties meet with the feeling of something like novelty—we have not worn out our jests in daily contact. There is also a disposition on such occasions to be courteous, and of course to be pleased." Another evening, spent in Rose Court, seems to have given him especial delight. He says—"I wrote hard till dressing time, when I went to Will Clerk's to dinner. As a bachelor, and keeping a small establishment, he does not do these things often, but they are proportionally pleasant when they come round. He had trusted Sir Adam to bespeak his dinner, who did it *con amore*, so we had excellent cheer, and the wines were various and capital. As I before hinted, it is not every day that M'Nab

* Afterwards Lord Advocate, and now a Judge of the Court of Session, by the title of Lord Murray.

mounts on horseback,* and so our landlord had a little of that solicitude that the party should go off well, which is very flattering to the guests. We had a very pleasant evening. The Chief-Commissioner was there, Admiral Adam, J. A. Murray, Tom Thomson, etc. etc.,—Sir Adam predominating at the head and dancing what he calls his merry-andrada in great style. In short, we really laughed, and real laughter is a thing as rare as real tears. I must say, too, there was a *heart*—a kindly feeling prevailed over the party. Can London give such a dinner?—it may, but I never saw one—they are too cold and critical to be easily pleased.—I hope the Bannatyne Club will be really useful and creditable. Thomson is superintending a capital edition of Sir James Melville's *Memoirs*. It is brave to see how he wags his Scots tongue, and what a difference there is in the form and firmness of the language, compared to the mincing English edition in which he has hitherto been alone known."

No wonder that it should be a sweet relief from Buonaparte and Blucher to see M'Nab on horseback, and Sir Adam Fergusson in his merry-andrada exaltation, and laugh over old Scotch stories with the Chief-Commissioner, and hear Mr. Thomas Thomson report progress as to the doings of the Bannatyne Club. But I apprehend every reader will see that Sir Walter was misled by his own modesty, when he doubted whether London could afford symposia of the same sort. He forgets that he had never mixed in the society of London except in the capacity of a stranger, a rare visitor, the unrivalled literary marvel of the time, and that every party at which he dined was got up expressly on his account, and constituted, whoever might be the landlord, on the natural principle of bringing together as many as the table could hold—to see and hear Sir Walter Scott. Hence, if he dined with a Minister of State, he was likely to find himself seated with half the Cabinet—if with a Bishop, half the Bench had been collected. As a matter of course, every man was anxious to gratify on so rare an occasion, as many as he could of those who, in case they were uninvited, would be likely to reproach him for the omission. The result was a crowding together of too many rival eminences; and he very seldom, indeed, witnessed the delightful result so constantly

* That singular personage, the late M'Nab of *that ilk*, spent his life almost entirely in a district where a boat was the usual conveyance. I suspect, however, that there is an allusion to some particular anecdote which I have not recovered.

produced in London by the intermingling of distinguished persons of various classes, full of facts and views new to each other—and neither chilled nor perplexed by the pernicious and degrading trickery of lonising. But besides, it was unfair to institute any comparison between the society of comparative strangers and that of old friends dear from boyhood. He could not have his Clerks and Fergussons both in Edinburgh and in London. Enough, however, of commentary on a very plain text.

That season was further enlivened by one public dinner, and this, though very briefly noticed in Scott's Diary, occupied a large space in public attention at the time, and, I believe I may add, several columns in every newspaper in Europe. His good friend William Murray, manager of the Edinburgh Theatre, invited him to preside at the first festival of a charitable fund for decayed performers. He agreed, and on Friday, February 23rd, took the chair, being supported by the Earl of Fife, Lord Meadowbank, Sir John Hope of Pinkie, Admiral Adam, Robert Dundas of Arniston, *Peter* Robertson, and many other personal friends. Lord Meadowbank had come on short notice, and was asked abruptly on his arrival to take a toast which had been destined for a noble person who had not been able to appear. He knew that this was the first public dinner at which the object of the toast had appeared since his misfortunes, and taking him aside in the anteroom, asked him whether he would now consider it indelicate to hazard a distinct reference to the parentage of the *Waverley* Novels. Sir Walter smiled, and said, "Do just as you like—only don't say much about so old a story."—In the course of the evening the Judge rose accordingly, and said—

"I would beg leave to propose a toast—the health of one of the Patrons. The clouds have been dispelled—the *darkness visible* has been cleared away—and the Great Unknown—the minstrel of our native land—the mighty magician who has rolled back the current of time, and conjured up before our living senses the men and the manners of days which have long passed away, stands revealed to the eyes and the hearts of his affectionate and admiring countrymen. We owe to him, as a people, a large and heavy debt of gratitude. He it is who has opened to foreigners the grand and characteristic beauties of our country;—it is to him that we owe that our gallant ancestors and illustrious patriots have obtained a fame no longer confined to the boundaries of a remote and comparatively obscure country—he it is who has conferred a new reputation on our national character, and bestowed on Scotland an imperishable name, were it only by her having given birth to himself. I propose the health of Sir Walter Scott."

Long before Lord Meadowbank ceased speaking, the company had got upon chairs and tables, and the storm of applause that ensued was deafening. When they recovered from the first fever, Sir Walter spoke as follows :—

“ I certainly did not think, in coming here to-day, that I should have the task of acknowledging before 300 gentlemen, a secret which, considering that it was communicated to more than twenty people, has been remarkably well kept. I am now at the bar of my country, and may be understood to be on trial before Lord Meadowbank as an offender ; and so quietly did all who were *airt and pairt* conduct themselves, that I am sure that, were the *panel* now to stand on his defence, every impartial jury would bring in a verdict of *Not Proven*. I am willing, however, to plead *guilty*—nor shall I detain the Court by a long explanation why my confession has been so long deferred. Perhaps caprice might have a considerable share in the matter. I have now to say, however, that the merits of these works, if they had any, and their faults, are all entirely imputable to myself. Like another Scottish criminal of more consequence, one Macbeth,

‘ I am afraid to think what I have done ;
Look on’t again I dare not.’—

I have thus far unbosomed myself, and I know that my confession will be reported to the public. I mean, then, seriously to state, that when I say I am the author, I mean the total and undivided author. With the exception of quotations, there is not a single word that was not derived from myself, or suggested in the course of my reading. The wand is now broken, and the book buried. You will allow me further to say, with Prospero, it is your breath that has filled my sails, and to crave one single toast in the capacity of the author of these novels. I would fain dedicate a bumper to the health of one who has represented several of those characters, of which I had endeavoured to give the skeleton, with a truth and liveliness for which I may well be grateful. I beg leave to propose the health of my friend Bailie Nicol Jarvie—and I am sure, that when the author of *Waverley* and *Rob Roy* drinks to Nicol Jarvie, it will be received with the just applause to which that gentleman has always been accustomed,—nay, that you will take care that on the present occasion it shall be PRO—DI—GI—OUS ! ” (Long and vehement applause.)

MR. MACKAY.—“ My conscience ! My worthy father the deacon could never have believed that his son would hae sic a compliment paid to him by the Great Unknown ! ”

SIR WALTER SCOTT.—“ The Small Known now, Mr. Bailie ! ”

The reader may, perhaps, expect that I should endeavour to name the “ upwards of twenty persons ” whom Sir Walter alluded to on this occasion as having been put into the secret of the *Waverley* Novels, previously, and without reference, to the catastrophe of 1826. I am by no means sure that I can give the complete list : but in addition to immediate members

of the author's own family—(including his mother and his brother Thomas,—there were Constable, Cadell, the two Ballantynes—two persons employed in the printing-office, namely Daniel M'Corkindale and Daniel Robertson—Mr. Terry, Mr. Laidlaw, Mr. Train, and Mr. G. H. Gordon—Charles, Duke of Buccleuch, Lady Louisa Stuart, Lord Montagu, Lord and Lady Polwarth, Lord Kinnedder, Sir Adam Fergusson, Mr. Morritt, Mr. and Mrs. Skene, Mr. William Clerk, Mr. Rose, Mr. Hay Donaldson, Mr. Thomas Shortrede, Mr. John Richardson, and Mr. Thomas Moore.

The Life of Buonaparte was at last published about the middle of June, 1827. Two years had elapsed since Scott began it; but, by a careful comparison of dates, I have arrived at the conclusion that, his expeditions to Ireland and Paris, and the composition of novels and critical miscellanies, being duly allowed for, the historical task occupied hardly more than twelve months. The book was closely printed; in fact, if it had been printed on the original model of his novels, *The Life of Buonaparte* would have filled from thirteen to fourteen volumes: the work of one twelvemonth—done in the midst of pain, sorrow, and ruin.

The general curiosity with which it was expected, and the satisfaction with which high and candid minds perused it, cannot be better described than in the words of the author's most illustrious literary contemporary:

"Walter Scott," says Goethe, "passed his childhood among the stirring scenes of the American War, and was a youth of seventeen or eighteen when the French Revolution broke out. Now well advanced in the fifties, having all along been favourably placed for observation, he proposes to lay before us his views and recollections of the important events through which he has lived. The richest, the easiest, the most celebrated narrator of the century, undertakes to write the history of his own time.

"What expectations the announcement of such a work must have excited in me, will be understood by any one who remembers that I, twenty years older than Scott, conversed with Paoli in the twentieth year of my age, and with Napoleon himself in the sixtieth.

"Through that long series of years, coming more or less into contact with the great doings of the world, I failed not to think seriously on what was passing around me, and, after my own fashion, to connect so many extraordinary mutations into something like arrangement and interdependence.

"What could now be more delightful to me, than leisurely and calmly to sit down and listen to the discourse of such a man, while clearly, truly, and with all the skill of a great artist, he recalls to me the incidents on which through life I have meditated, and the influence of which is still daily in operation?"—*Kunst und Altherthum*.

Woodstock, as we have seen, placed upwards of £8,000 in the hands of Sir Walter's creditors. The *Napoleon* (first and second editions) produced for them a sum which it even now startles me to mention,—£18,000. As by the time the historical work was published, nearly half of the First Series of *Chronicles of the Canongate* had been written, it is obvious that the amount to which Scott's literary industry, from the close of 1825, to June 10th, 1827, had diminished his debt, cannot be stated at less than £28,000. Had health been spared him, how soon must he have freed himself from all his encumbrances !

CHAPTER XV

Death of Constable—Excursion to Durham—Publication of the *Chronicles of the Canongate* and *Tales of a Grandfather*—Religious Discourses—*Fair Maid of Perth*—*Anne of Geierstein*—Threatening of Apoplexy—Death of Thomas Purdie. 1827-1829.

MY wife and I spent the summer of 1827, partly at a sea-bathing place near Edinburgh, and partly in Roxburghshire. The arrival of his daughter and her children at Portobello was a source of constant refreshment to Scott during June ; for every other day he came down and dined there, and strolled about afterwards on the beach ; thus interrupting, beneficially for his health, and I doubt not for the result of his labours also, the new custom of regular night-work, or, as he called it, of serving double-tides. When the Court released him, and he returned to Abbotsford, his family did what they could to keep him to his ancient evening habits ; but nothing was so useful as the presence of his invalid grandson. The poor child was at this time so far restored as to be able to sit his pony again ; and Sir Walter, who had, as the reader may observe, conceived, the very day he finished *Napoleon*, the notion of putting together a series of Tales on the history of Scotland, somewhat in the manner of Mr. Croker's on that of England, rode daily among the woods with his "Hugh Littlejohn," and told the story, and ascertained that it suited the comprehension of boyhood, before he reduced it to writing. Sibyl Grey had been dismissed in consequence of the accident at the Catrail ; and he had now stooped his pride to a sober, steady creature, of very humble blood ; dun, with black mane

and legs ; by name Douce Davie, *alias* the Covenanter. This, the last of his steeds, by the way, had been previously in the possession of a jolly old laird near Peebles, and acquired a distinguished reputation by its skill in carrying him home safely when drunk. Douce Davie, on such occasions, accommodated himself to the swerving balance of his rider with such nice discrimination, that on the laird's death the country people expected a vigorous competition for the sagacious animal ; but the club-companions of the defunct stood off to a man when it was understood that the Sheriff coveted the succession.

The *Chronicles of the Canongate* proceeded *pari passu* with these historical tales ; and both works were published before the end of the year. He also superintended, at the same time, the first collection of his Prose Miscellanies, in six volumes 8vo—several articles being remodelled and extended to adapt them for a more permanent sort of existence than had been originally thought of. Moreover, he penned that autumn his beautiful and instructive article on the Planting of Waste Lands, which is indeed no other than a precious chapter of his autobiography. What he wrote of new matter between June and December, fills from five to six volumes in the late uniform edition of his works ; but all this was light and easy after the perilous drudgery of the preceding eighteen months.

On July 22nd his Diary notes the death of Mr. Constable : “ This might have been a most important thing to me if it had happened some years ago, and I should then have lamented it much. He has lived to do me some injury ; yet, excepting the last £5,000, I think most unintentionally. He was a prince of booksellers. Constable was a violent tempered man with those he dared use freedom with. He was easily overawed by people of consequence ; but, as usual, took it out of those whom poverty made subservient to him. Yet he was generous, and far from bad-hearted :—in person good-looking, but very corpulent latterly ; a large feeder, and deep drinker, till his health became weak. He died of water in the chest, which the natural strength of his constitution set long at defiance. I have no great reason to regret him ; yet I do. If he deceived me, he also deceived himself.”

He received about this time a visit from Mr. J. L. Adolphus ; who had not seen him since 1824—and says :

“ Calamity had borne heavily upon Sir Walter in the interval ; but the painful and anxious feeling with which a friend is approached for the first time under such circumstances, gave

way at once to the unassumed serenity of his manner. There were some signs of age about him which the mere lapse of time would scarcely have accounted for ; but his spirits were abated only, not broken; if they had sunk, they had sunk equably and gently. It was a declining, not a clouded sun. I do not remember any reference to the afflictions he had suffered, except once, when, speaking of his *Life of Napoleon*, he said in a quiet but affecting tone, 'I could have done it better, if I could have written at more leisure, and with a mind more at ease.' One morning a party was made to breakfast at Chiefswood ; and any one who on that occasion looked at and heard Sir Walter Scott, in the midst of his children and grandchildren and friends, must have rejoiced to see that life still yielded him a store of pleasures, and that his heart was as open to their influence as ever. I was much struck by a few words which fell from him on this subject a short time afterwards. After mentioning an accident which had spoiled the promised pleasure of a visit to his daughter in London, he then added—'I have had as much happiness in my time as most men, and I must not complain now.' I said, that whatever had been his share of happiness, no man could have laboured better for it. He answered—'I consider the capacity to labour as part of the happiness I have enjoyed.'

"A substitute for walking, which he always very cheerfully used, and which at last became his only resource for any distant excursion, was a ride in a four-wheeled open carriage, holding four persons, but not absolutely limited to that number on an emergency. Tame as this exercise might be in comparison with riding on horseback, or with walking under propitious circumstances, yet as he was rolled along to Melrose, or Bowhill, or Yair, his spirits always freshened ; the air, the sounds, the familiar yet romantic scenes, wakened up all the poetry of his thoughts, and happy were they who heard it resolve itself into words. At the sight of certain objects—for example, in passing the green foundations of the little chapel of Lindean, where the body of the 'Dark Knight of Liddesdale' was deposited on its way to Melrose,—it would, I suppose, have been impossible for him, unless with a companion hopelessly unsusceptible or preoccupied, to forbear some passing comment, some harping (if the word may be favourably used) on the tradition of the place. This was, perhaps, what he called 'bestowing his tediousness ;' but if any one could think these effusions tedious because they often broke forth, such a man

might have objected against the rushing of the Tweed, or the stirring of the trees in the wind, or any other natural melody, that he had heard the same thing before.

"Some days of my visit were marked by an almost perpetual confinement to the house; the rain being incessant. But the evenings were as bright and cheerful as the atmosphere of the days was dreary. Not that the gloomiest morning could ever be wearisome where, independently of the resources in society which the house afforded, the visitor might ransack a library, unique, I suppose, in some of its collections, and in all its departments interesting and characteristic of the founder. So many of the volumes were enriched with anecdotes or comments in his own hand, that to look over his books was in some degree conversing with him. And sometimes this occupation was pleasantly interrupted by a snatch of actual conversation with himself, when he entered from his own room to consult or take away a book. How often have I heard with pleasure, after a long silence, the uneven step, the point of the stick striking against the floor, and then seen the poet himself emerge from his study, with a face of thought but yet of cheerfulness, followed perhaps by Nimrod, who stretched his limbs and yawned, as if tired out with some abstruse investigation.

"On one of the rainy days I have alluded to, when walking at the usual hour became hopeless, Sir Walter asked me to sit with him while he continued his morning occupation, giving me for my own employment the publications of the Bannatyne Club. His study, as I recollect it, was strictly a work-room, though an elegant one. It had been fancifully decked out in pictures, but it had, I think, very few articles of mere ornament. The chief of these was the print of Stothard's Canterbury Pilgrims, which hung over the chimney-piece, and from the place assigned to it must have been in great favour, though Sir Walter made the characteristic criticism upon it that, if the procession were to move, the young Squire who is prancing in the foreground would in another minute be over his horse's head. The shelves were stored with serviceable books; one door opened into the great library, and a hanging-stair within the room itself communicated with his bedroom. It would have been a good lesson to a desultory student, or even to a moderately active amanuensis, to see the unintermitted energy with which Sir Walter Scott applied himself to his work. I conjectured that he was at this time writing

the *Tales of a Grandfather*. When we had sat down to our respective employments, the stillness of the room was unbroken, except by the light rattle of the rain against the windows, and the dashing trot of Sir Walter's pen over his paper; sounds not very unlike each other, and which seemed to vie together in rapidity and continuance. Sometimes, when he stopped to consult a book, a short dialogue would take place upon the subjects with which I was occupied—about Mary Queen of Scots, perhaps, or Viscount Dundee; or, again, the silence might be broken for a moment by some merry outcry in the hall, from one of the little grandchildren, which would half waken Nimrod, or Bran, or Spice, as they slept at Sir Walter's feet, and produce a growl or a stifled bark—not in anger, but by way of protest. For matters like these, work did not proceed the worse, nor, as it seemed to me, did Sir Walter feel at all discomposed by such interruptions as a message or the entrance of a visitor. One door of his study opened into the hall, and there did not appear to be any understanding that he should not be disturbed. At the end of our morning we attempted a sortie, but had made only a little way in the shrubbery-walks overlooking the Tweed, when the rain drove us back. The river, swollen and discoloured, swept by majestically, and the sight drew from Sir Walter his favourite lines—

'I've seen Tweed's silver streams, glittering in the sunny beams,
Turn drumly and dark, as they rolled on their way.'

There could not have been a better moment for appreciating the imagery of the last line. I think it was in this short walk that he mentioned to me, with great satisfaction, the favourable prospects of his literary industry, and spoke sanguinely of retrieving his losses with the booksellers."

Sir Walter this year received an invitation from Lord and Lady Ravensworth to meet the Duke of Wellington at their castle near Durham. The Duke was then making a progress in the north of England, to which additional importance was given by the condition of politics;—the chance of Lord Goderich's being able to maintain himself as Canning's successor seeming very precarious—and the opinion that his Grace must soon be called to the helm of State gaining ground every day. Sir Walter, who felt for the Great Captain the pure and exalted devotion that might have been expected from some honoured soldier of his banners, accepted this invitation, and witnessed a scene of enthusiasm with which its principal object could hardly have

been more gratified than he was. The most remarkable feature was a grand dinner in the Episcopal Castle at Durham—that See being as yet unshorn of its Palatine magnificence. “On the 3rd October,” says his Diary, “we dined about one hundred and forty or fifty men—a distinguished company—

‘Lords and Dukes and noble Princes,
All the pride and flower of Spain.’

We dined in the old baronial hall, impressive from its rude antiquity, and fortunately free from the plaster of former improvement, as I trust it will long be from the gingerbread taste of modern Gothicismers. The bright moon streaming in through the old Gothic windows contrasted strangely with the artificial lights within; spears, banners, and armour, were intermixed with the pictures of old bishops, and the whole had a singular mixture of baronial pomp with the grave and more chastened dignity of prelacy. The conduct of our reverend entertainer suited the character remarkably well. Amid the welcome of a Count Palatine he did not for an instant forget the gravity of the Church dignitary. All his toasts were gracefully given, and his little speeches well made, and the more affecting that the falling voice sometimes reminded us that our host laboured under the infirmities of advanced life.” I was favoured at the time with a letter from Dr. Phillpotts (now Bishop of Exeter) who said—“I never saw curiosity and enthusiasm, so highly excited, and I may add, as to a great part of the company, so nearly balanced. Sometimes I doubted whether the hero or the poet was fixing most attention—the latter, I need hardly tell you, appeared unconscious that he was regarded differently from the others about him, until the good Bishop rose and proposed his health.” Another friend, the Honourable Henry Liddell, says—“Bishop Van Mildert gave his health with peculiar felicity, remarking that he could reflect upon the labours of a long literary life, with the consciousness that everything he had written tended to the practice of virtue, and to the improvement of the human race. Sir Walter replied, ‘that hereafter he should always reflect with great pride upon that moment of his existence, when his health had been given *in such terms*, by the Bishop of Durham *in his own baronial hall*, surrounded and supported by the assembled aristocracy of the two northern counties, and *in the presence of the Duke of Wellington*.’”

On the 8th Sir Walter reached Abbotsford, and forthwith resumed his *Grandfather's Tales*, which he composed throughout

with the ease and heartiness reflected in this entry : " This morning was damp, dripping, and unpleasant ; so I even made a work of necessity, and set to the *Tales* like a dragon. I murdered Maclellan of Bomby at the Thrieve Castle ; stabbed the Black Douglas in the town of Stirling ; astonished King James before Roxburgh ; and stifled the Earl of Mar in his bath in the Canongate. A wild world, my masters, this Scotland of ours must have been. No fear of want of interest ; no lassitude in those days for want of work—

' For treason, d'ye see,
Was to them a dish of tea,
And murder bread and butter.' "

Such was his life in Autumn, 1827. Before I leave the period, I must note how greatly I admired the manner in which all his dependents appeared to have met the reverse of his fortunes—a reverse which inferred very considerable alteration in the circumstances of every one of them. The butler, Dalglish, had been told when the distress came, that a servant of his class would no longer be required—but the man burst into tears, and said, rather than go he would stay without any wages : so he remained—and instead of being the easy chief of a large establishment, was now doing half the work of the house, at probably half his former salary. Old Peter, who had been for five-and-twenty years a dignified coachman, was now ploughman in ordinary, only putting his horses to the carriage upon high and rare occasions ; and so on with all the rest that remained of the ancient train. And all, to my view, seemed happier than they had ever done before. Their good conduct had given every one of them a new elevation in his own mind—and yet their demeanour had gained, in place of losing, in simple humility of observance. The great loss was that of William Laidlaw, for whom (the estate being all but a fragment in the hands of the trustees and their agent) there was now no occupation here. The cottage, which his taste had converted into a lovable retreat, had found a rent-paying tenant ; and he was living a dozen miles off on the farm of a relation in the Vale of Yarrow. Every week, however, he came down to have a ramble with Sir Walter over their old haunts—to hear how the pecuniary atmosphere was darkening or brightening ; and to read in every face at Abbotsford, that it could never be itself again until circumstances should permit his re-establishment at Kaeside.

All this warm and respectful solicitude must have had a

salutary influence on the mind of Scott, who may be said to have lived upon love. No man cared less about popular admiration and applause; but for the least chill on the affection of any near and dear to him he had the sensitiveness of a maiden. I cannot forget, in particular, how his eyes sparkled when he first pointed out to me Peter Mathieson guiding the plough on the haugh: "Egad," said he, "auld *Pepe*" (this was the children's name for their good friend)—"auld *Pepe's* whistling at his darg. The honest fellow said, a yoking in a deep field would do baith him and the blackies good. If things get round with me, easy shall be *Pepe's* cushion." In general, during that autumn, I thought Sir Walter enjoyed much his usual spirits; and often, no doubt, he did so. His Diary, however, shews (what perhaps many of his intimates doubted during his lifetime) that, in spite of the dignified equanimity which characterised all his conversation with mankind, he had his full share of the delicate sensibilities, the mysterious ups and downs, the wayward melancholy, and fantastic sunbeams of the poetical temperament. It is only with imaginative minds, in truth, that sorrows of the spirit are enduring. Those he had encountered were veiled from the eye of the world, but they lasted with his life.

The first series of *Chronicles of the Canongate*—(which title supplanted that of *The Canongate Miscellany, or Traditions of the Sanctuary*)—was published early in the winter. The contents were, *The Highland Widow*, *The Two Drovers*, and *The Surgeon's Daughter*—all in their styles excellent, except that the Indian part of the last does not well harmonise with the rest; and certain preliminary chapters which were generally considered as still better than the stories they introduce. The portraiture of Mrs. Murray Keith, under the name of Mrs. Bethune Baliol, and that of Chrystal Croftangry throughout, appear to me unsurpassed in Scott's writings. In the former, I am assured he has mixed up various features of his own beloved mother; and in the latter, there can be no doubt that a good deal was taken from nobody but himself. In fact, the choice of the hero's residence, the original title of the book, and a world of minor circumstances, were suggested by painful circumstances recorded in his Diary of 1827. He had, while toiling his life out for his creditors, received various threatenings of severe treatment from the London Jews formerly alluded to, Messrs. Abud and Co.; and, on at least one occasion, he made every preparation for taking shelter in the Sanctuary of

Holyrood House. Although these people were well aware that at Christmas, 1827, a very large dividend would be paid on the Ballantyne debt, they could not bring themselves to comprehend that their interest lay in allowing Scott the free use of his time ; that by thwarting and harassing him personally, nothing was likely to be achieved but the throwing up of the trust, and the settlement of the insolvent house's affairs on the usual terms of a sequestration. The Jews would understand nothing, but that the very unanimity of the other creditors as to the propriety of being gentle with him, rendered it extremely probable that their own harshness might be rewarded by immediate payment of their whole demand. They fancied that the trustees would clear off any one debt, rather than disturb the arrangements generally adopted ; they fancied that, in case they laid Sir Walter Scott in prison, there would be some extraordinary burst of feeling in Edinburgh—that private friends would interfere ;—in short, that in one way or another, they should get hold, without farther delay, of their “pound of flesh.”—Two paragraphs from the Diary will be enough as to this unpleasant subject :—

“*October 31.*—Just as I was merrily cutting away among my trees, arrives Mr. Gibson with a very melancholy look, and indeed the news he brought was shocking enough. It seems Mr. Abud has given positive orders to take out diligence against me for his debt. This breaks all the measures we had resolved on, and prevents the dividend from taking place, by which many poor persons will be great sufferers. For me—the alternative will be more painful to my feelings than prejudicial to my interests. To submit to a sequestration, and allow the creditors to take what they can get, will be the inevitable consequence. This will cut short my labour by several years, which I might spend, and spend in vain, in endeavouring to meet their demands. I suppose that I, the Chronicler of the Canongate, will have to take up my residence in the Sanctuary, unless I prefer the more airy residence of the Calton Jail, or a trip to the Isle of Man. *November 4.*—Put my papers in some order, and prepared for the journey. It is in the style of the Emperors of Abyssinia, who proclaim, ‘Cut down the Kantuffa in the four quarters of the world, for I know not where I am going.’ Yet, were it not for poor Anne’s doleful looks, I would feel firm as a piece of granite. Even the poor dogs seem to fawn on me with anxious meaning, as if there were something going on they could not comprehend. Set off

at twelve, firmly resolved in body and mind. But when I arrived in Edinburgh at my faithful friend Mr. Gibson's—lo ! the scene had again changed, and a new hare is started."

The "new hare" was this. It transpired in the very nick of time, that a suspicion of usury attached to these Israelites in a transaction with Hurst and Robinson, as to one or more of the bills for which the house of Ballantyne had become responsible. This suspicion assumed a shape sufficiently tangible to justify that house's trustees in carrying the point before the Court of Session. Thus, though the Court decided in favour of the Abuds, time was gained ; and as soon as the decision was pronounced, Scott heard also that the Jews' debt was settled. In fact, Sir William Forbes, whose banking-house was one of Messrs. Ballantyne's chief creditors, had crowned his generous efforts for Scott's relief by privately paying the whole of Abud's demand (nearly £2,000) out of his own pocket—ranking as an ordinary creditor for the amount ; and taking care at the same time that his old friend should be allowed to believe that the affair had merged quietly in the general measures of the trustees. It was not until some time after Sir William's death, that Sir Walter learned what had been done on this occasion ; and I may as well add here, that he died in utter ignorance of some services of a like sort which he owed to the secret liberality of three of his brethren at the Clerks' table—Hector Macdonald Buchanan, Colin Mackenzie, and Sir Robert Dundas. I ought not to omit, that as soon as Sir Walter's eldest son heard of the Abud business, he left Ireland for Edinburgh ; but before he reached his father, the alarm had blown over.

This vision of the real Canongate has drawn me away from the Chronicles of Mr Croftangry. The scenery of his patrimonial inheritance was sketched from that of Carmichael, the ancient and now deserted mansion of the noble family of Hyndford ; but for his strongly Scottish feelings about parting with his *land*, and stern efforts to suppress them, the author had not to go so far a-field. Christie Steele's brief character of Croftangry's ancestry, too, appears to suit well all that we have on record concerning his own more immediate progenitors of the stubborn race of Raeburn : "They werena ill to the poor folk, sir, and that is aye something ; they were just decent bein bodies. Ony poor creature that had face to beg got an awmous, and welcome ; they that were shamefaced gaed by, and twice as welcome. But they keepit an honest walk before God and

man, the Croftangrys ; and as I said before, if they did little good, they did as little ill. They lifted their rents and spent them ; called in their kain and eat them ; gaed to the kirk of a Sunday ; bowed civilly if folk took aff their bannets as they gaed by, and lookit as black as sin at them that keepit them on." I shall give no offence by adding that many things in the character and manners of Mr. Gideon Gray of Middlemas, in the Tale of *The Surgeon's Daughter*, were considered at the time by Sir Walter's neighbours on Tweedside as copied from Dr. Ebenezer Clarkson of Selkirk. "He was," says the Chronicler, "of such reputation in the medical world, that he had been often advised to exchange the village and its meagre circle of practice for Edinburgh. There is no creature in Scotland that works harder, and is more poorly requited, than the country doctor, unless perhaps it may be his horse. Yet the horse is, and indeed must be, hardy, active, and indefatigable, in spite of a rough coat and indifferent condition ; and so you will often find in his master, under a blunt exterior, professional skill and enthusiasm, intelligence, humanity, courage, and science." A true picture—a portrait from the life, of Scott's hard-riding, benevolent, and sagacious old friend, "to all the country dear."

These *Chronicles* were not received with exceeding favour at the time ; and Sir Walter was a good deal discouraged. Indeed he seems to have been with some difficulty persuaded by Cadell and Ballantyne that it would not do for him to "lie fallow" as a novelist ; and then, when he in compliance with their entreaties began a Second Canongate Series, they were both disappointed with his MS., and told him their opinions so plainly that his good-nature was sharply tried. The Tales which they disapproved of, were those of *My Aunt Margaret's Mirror*, and *The Laird's Fock* ; he consented to lay them aside, and began *St. Valentine's Eve, or The Fair Maid of Perth*, which from the first pleased his critics. It was in the brief interval occasioned by these misgivings and debates, that his ever elastic mind threw off another charming paper for *The Quarterly Review*—that on Ornamental Gardening, by way of sequel to the Essay on Planting Waste Lands. Another fruit of his leisure was a sketch of the life of George Bannatyne, the collector of ancient Scottish poetry, for the Club which bears his name.

He had taken, for that winter, the house No. 6 Shandwick Place, which he occupied by the month during the remainder of his servitude as a Clerk of Session. Very near this house,

he was told a few days after he took possession, dwelt the aged mother of his first love ; and he expressed to his friend Mrs. Skene a wish that she should carry him to renew an acquaintance which seems to have been interrupted from the period of his youthful romance. Mrs. Skene complied with his desire, and she tells me that a very painful scene ensued.

A few days afterwards arrived a very agreeable piece of intelligence. The King had not forgotten his promise with respect to the poet's second son ; and Lord Dudley, then Secretary of State for the Foreign Department, was very well disposed to comply with the royal recommendation. Charles was appointed to a clerkship in the Foreign Office ; and his settlement was rapidly followed by more than one fortunate incident in his father's literary and pecuniary history. The first *Tales of a Grandfather* appeared early in December, and their reception was more rapturous than that of any one of his works since *Ivanhoe*. He had solved for the first time the problem of narrating history, so as at once to excite and gratify the curiosity of youth, and please and instruct the wisest of mature minds. The popularity of the book has grown with every year that has since elapsed ; it is equally prized in the library, the boudoir, the schoolroom, and the nursery ; it is adopted as the happiest of manuals, not only in Scotland, but wherever the English tongue is spoken ; nay, it is to be seen in the hands of old and young all over the civilised world, and has, I have little doubt, extended the knowledge of Scottish history in quarters where little or no interest had ever before been awakened as to any other parts of that subject, except those immediately connected with Mary Stuart and the Chevalier.

There had been serious doubts, in what proportions the copyright of the novels, etc., was vested, at the moment of the common calamity, in Scott or in Constable. One of the ablest of the Scotch Judges, John Irving, Lord Newton, undertook the settlement of this complicated question, as private arbiter : and the result of his ultimate award was, that Scott had lost all hold on the copyright of the Novels from *Waverley* to *Quentin Durward* ; but that *Napoleon* and *Woodstock* were wholly his. This decision, however, was not to be expected speedily : it had now become highly expedient to bring the body of copyrights to sale—and it was agreed to do so, the money to be deposited in bank until the award were given. This sale (on December 19th, 1827) comprised all the Novels from *Waverley* to *Quentin*

Durward inclusive, besides a majority of the shares of the Poetical Works. Mr. Cadell's family and private friends were extremely desirous to secure for him part at least of these copyrights; and Sir Walter's were not less so that he should seize this last opportunity of recovering a share in the prime fruits of his genius. The relations by this time established between him and Cadell were those of strict confidence and kindness; and both saw well that the property would be comparatively lost, were it not ensured that thenceforth the whole should be managed as one unbroken concern. The result was, that the copyrights exposed to sale were purchased, one-half for Sir Walter, the other half for Cadell, at the price of £8,500. Well might the "pockpuddings"—for so the Diary styles the English book-sellers—rue their timidity on this day; but it was the most lucky one that ever came for Sir Walter's creditors. A dividend of six shillings in the pound was paid at this Christmas on their whole claims. The result of their high-hearted debtor's exertions, between January, 1826, and January, 1828, was in all very nearly £40,000. No literary biographer, in all likelihood, will ever have such another fact to record. The creditors unanimously passed a vote of thanks for the indefatigable industry which had achieved so much for their behoof.

He now took up in earnest two pieces of work, which promised and brought great ultimate advantage; namely, a complete collection of his Poems, with *biographical* prefaces; the other, an uniform edition of his Novels, each to be introduced by an account of the hints on which it had been founded, and illustrated throughout by historical and antiquarian annotations. On this last, commonly mentioned in the Diary as the *Magnum Opus*, Sir Walter bestowed pains commensurate with its importance;—and in the execution of the very delicate task which either scheme imposed, he has certainly displayed such a combination of frankness and modesty as entitles him to a high place in the short list of graceful autobiographers. True dignity is always simple; and perhaps true genius, of the highest class at least, is always humble. These operations took up much time; yet he laboured hard this year both as a novelist and a historian. He contributed, moreover, several articles to *The Quarterly Review* and the Bannatyne Club library; and to the journal conducted by Mr. Gillies, an excellent Essay on Molière; this last being again a free gift to the editor.

But the first advertisement of 1828 was of a new order; and the announcement that the Author of *Waverley* had *Sermons* in

the press, was received perhaps with as much incredulity in the clerical world, as could have been excited among them by that of a romance from the Archbishop of Canterbury. A thin octavo volume, entitled *Religious Discourses by a Layman*, and having "W. S." at the foot of a short preface, did, however, issue in the course of the spring, and from the shop, that all might be in perfect keeping, of Mr. Colburn, a bookseller then known almost exclusively as the standing purveyor of what is called light reading—novels of fashionable life and the like pretty ephemera. I am afraid that the *Religious Discourses*, too, would, but for the author's name, have had a brief existence.

The only entries in the Diary which relate to the business, are the following : "*December 28.*—Huntly Gordon writes me in despair about £180 of debt which he has incurred. He wishes to publish two sermons which I wrote for him when he was taking orders ; and he would get little money for them without my name. People may exclaim against the undesired and unwelcome zeal of him who stretched his hand to help the ark over, with the best intentions, and cry sacrilege. And yet they will do me gross injustice, for I would, if called upon, die a martyr for the Christian religion, so completely is (in my poor opinion) its divine origin proved by its beneficial effects on the state of society. Were we but to name the abolition of slavery and polygamy, how much has, in these two words, been granted to mankind in the lessons of our Saviour ! *January 10, 1828.*—Huntly Gordon has disposed of the two sermons to the bookseller, Colburn, for £250 ; well sold, I think, and to go forth immediately. I would rather the thing had not gone there, and far rather that it had gone nowhere, yet hang it, if it makes the poor lad easy, what needs I fret about it ? After all, there would be little grace in doing a kind thing, if you did not suffer pain or inconvenience upon the score."

The next literary entry is this : "Mr. Heath, the engraver, invites me to take charge of a yearly publication called *The Keepsake*, of which the plates are beyond comparison beautiful, but the letter-press indifferent enough. He proposes £800 a-year if I would become editor, and £400 if I would contribute from seventy to one hundred pages. I declined both, but told him I might give him some trifling thing or other. To become the stipendiary editor of a New-Year's Gift-Book is not to be thought of, nor could I agree to work regularly, for any quantity of supply, at such a publication. Even the pecuniary

view is not flattering, though Mr. Heath meant it should be so. One hundred of his close printed pages, for which he offers £400, are nearly equal to one volume of a novel. Each novel of three volumes brings £4,000, and I remain proprietor of the mine after the first ore is scooped out." The result was that Mr. Heath received, for £500, the liberty of printing in his *Keepsake* the long-forgotten juvenile drama of *The House of Aspen*, with *Aunt Margaret's Mirror*, and two other little tales, which had been omitted, at Ballantyne's entreaty, from the second *Chronicles of Croftangry*. But Sir Walter regretted having meddled in any way with the toy-shop of literature, and would never do so again, though repeatedly offered very large sums—nor even when the motive of private regard was added, upon Mr. Allan Cunningham's lending his name to one of these painted bladders. In the same week that Mr. Heath made his proposition, Sir Walter received another, which he thus disposes of in his *Diary*: "I have an invitation from Messrs. Saunders and Ottley, booksellers, offering me from £500 to £2,000 annually to conduct a journal; but I am their humble servant. I am too indolent to stand to that sort of work, and I must preserve the undisturbed use of my leisure, and possess my soul in quiet. A large income is not my object; I must clear my debts; and that is to be done by writing things of which I can retain the property."

He finished his novel by the end of March, and immediately set out for London, where the last budget of proof-sheets reached him. The *Fair Maid* was, and continues to be, highly popular, and though never classed with his performances of the first file, it has undoubtedly several scenes equal to what the best of them can shew, and is on the whole a work of brilliant variety and most lively interest.

Though the Introduction of 1830 says a good deal on the most original character, that of Connachar, the reader may not be sorry to have one paragraph on that subject from the *Diary*: "*December 5, 1827.*—The fellow that swam the Tay, and escaped, would be a good ludicrous character. But I have a mind to try him in the serious line of tragedy. Miss Baillie has made her Ethling a coward by temperament, and a hero when touched by filial affection. Suppose a man's nerves, supported by feelings of honour, or say by the spur of jealousy, sustaining him against constitutional timidity to a certain point, then suddenly giving way, I think something tragic might be produced. James Ballantyne's criticism is too much moulded upon

the general taste of novels to admit (I fear) this species of reasoning. But what can one do? I am hard up as far as imagination is concerned,—yet the world calls for novelty. Well, I'll try my brave coward or cowardly brave man. *Valeat quantum.*"

I alluded in an early chapter, to a circumstance in Sir Walter's conduct which it was painful to mention, and added, that in advanced life he himself spoke of it with a deep feeling of contrition. Talking over this character of Connachar, just before the book appeared, he told me the unhappy fate of his brother Daniel, and how he had declined to be present at his funeral or wear mourning for him. He added—"My secret motive in this attempt was to perform a sort of expiation to my poor brother's manes. I have now learned to have more tolerance and compassion than I had in those days." I said he put me in mind of Samuel Johnson's standing bareheaded, in the last year of his life, on the market-place of Uttoxeter, by way of penance for a piece of juvenile irreverence towards his father. "Well, no matter," said he; "perhaps that's not the worst thing in the Doctor's story."*

Sir Walter and Miss Scott remained at this time six weeks in the Regent's Park. His eldest son's regiment was stationed at Hampton Court; the second had recently taken his desk at the Foreign Office, and was living in my house; he had thus looked forward to a happy meeting with all his family—but he encountered scenes of sickness and distress, in consequence of which I saw but little of him in general society. Nor is his Diary particularly interesting: with the exception of a few entries. That for May 1st is: "Breakfasted with Lord and Lady Francis Gower, and enjoyed the splendid treat of hearing Mrs. Arkwright sing her own music, which is of the highest order;—no forced vagaries of the voice, no caprices of tone, but all telling upon and increasing the feeling the words require. This is 'marrying music to immortal verse.' Most people place them on separate maintenance." Among other songs, Mrs. Arkwright delighted Sir Walter with her own set of—

"Farewell! farewell!—The voice you hear
Has left its last soft tone with you:
Its next must join the seaward cheer,
And shout among the shouting crew," etc.

He was sitting by me, at some distance from the lady, and whispered as she closed—"Capital words—whose are they?"

* See *Boswell* under August, 1784.

Byron's, I suppose, but I don't remember them." He was astonished when I told him that they were his own in *The Pirate*. He seemed pleased at the moment, but said next minute—"You have distressed me—if memory goes, all is up with me, for that was always my strong point."

"May 5.—Breakfasted with Haydon, and sat for my head. I hope this artist is on his legs again. The King has given him a lift, by buying his clever picture of the Mock Election in the King's Bench Prison. Haydon was once a great admirer and companion of the champions of the Cockney school, and is now disposed to renounce them and their opinions. To this kind of conversation I did not give much way. A painter should have nothing to do with politics. He is certainly a clever fellow, but too enthusiastic, which, however, distress seems to have cured in some degree. His wife, a pretty woman, looked happy to see me, and that is something. Yet it was very little I could do to help them.* May 8.—Dined with Mrs. Alexander of Ballochmyle :—Lord and Lady Meath, who were kind to us in Ireland, and a Scottish party, pleasant from having the broad accents and honest thoughts of my native land. A large circle in the evening. A gentleman came up to me and asked 'If I had seen *The Casket*, a curious work, the most beautiful, the most highly ornamented,—and then the editor or editress—a female so interesting,—might he ask a very great favour?' and out he pulled a piece of this picnic. I was really angry, and said,—for a subscription he might command me; for a contributor—No. This may be misrepresented, but I care not. Suppose this patron of the Muses gives five guineas to his distressed lady, he will think he does a great deal, yet he takes fifty from me with the calmest air in the world; for the communication is worth that if it be worth anything. There is no equalising in the proposal. May 11.—Dined with his Majesty in a very private party, five or six only being present. It is impossible to conceive a more friendly manner than that his Majesty used towards me. May 19.—Dined by command with the Duchess of Kent. I was very kindly recognised by Prince Leopold—and presented to the little Princess Victoria—I hope they will change

* Sir Walter had shortly before been one of the contributors to a subscription for Mr. Haydon. The imprisonment from which this subscription relieved the artist produced, I need scarcely say, the picture mentioned in the Diary. This clever man concluded an unhappy history in the unhappiest manner in 1846.

her name—the heir-apparent to the crown as things now stand. How strange that so large and fine a family as that of his late Majesty, should have died off, or decayed into old age, with so few descendants. Prince George of Cumberland is, they say, a fine boy about nine years old—a bit of a Pickle. This little lady is educating with much care, and watched so closely, that no busy maid has a moment to whisper, ‘You are heir of England.’ I suspect if we could dissect the little heart, we should find that some pigeon or other bird of the air had carried the matter. She is fair, like the royal family—the Duchess herself very pleasing and affable in her manners. I sat by Mr. Spring Rice, a very agreeable man. There were also Charles Wynn and his lady—and the evening, for a Court evening, went agreeably off. I am commanded for two days by Prince Leopold, but will send excuses. *May 25.*—After a morning of letter-writing, leave-taking, papers-destroying, and God knows what trumpery, Sophia and I set out for Hampton Court, carrying with us the following lions and lionesses—Samuel Rogers, Tom Moore, Wordsworth, with wife and daughter. We were very kindly and properly received by Walter and his wife, and had a very pleasant day. At parting, Rogers gave me a gold-mounted pair of glasses, which I will not part with in a hurry. I really like S. R., and have always found him most friendly.”

Breakfasting one morning with Allan Cunningham (whose notes are before me), he looked round the table, and said, “What are you going to make of all these boys, Allan?”—“I ask that question often at my own heart,” said Allan, “and I cannot answer it.”—“What does the eldest point to?”—“The callant would fain be a soldier, Sir Walter—and I have half a promise of a commission in the King’s army for him; but I wish rather he could go to India, for there the pay is a maintenance, and one does not need interest at every step to get on.” Scott dropped the subject; but went an hour afterwards to Lord Melville (who was now President of the Board of Control), and begged a cadetship for young Cunningham. Lord Melville promised to inquire if he had one at his disposal, in which case he would gladly serve the son of “honest Allan;” but the point being thus left doubtful, Scott meeting Mr. John Loch, one of the East-India Directors, at dinner the same evening at Lord Stafford’s, applied to him, and received an immediate assent. On reaching home at night, he found a note from Lord Melville, intimating that he had inquired, and was happy in

complying with his request. Next morning, Sir Walter appeared at Sir F. Chantrey's breakfast-table, and greeted the sculptor (a brother of the angle) with—"I suppose it has sometimes happened to you to catch one trout (which was all you thought of) with the fly, and another with the bobber. I have done so, and I think I shall land them both. Don't you think Cunningham would like very well to have cadetships for two of those fine lads?"—"To be sure he would," said Chantrey; "and if you'll secure the commissions, I'll make the outfit easy." Great was the joy in Allan's household on this double good news; but I should add, that before the thing was done he had to thank another benefactor. Lord Melville, after all, went out of the Board of Control before he had been able to fulfil his promise; but his successor, Lord Ellenborough, on hearing the case, desired Cunningham to set his mind at rest; and both his young men are now prospering in the India service.

"Rokeby, May 30.—A mile from the house we met Morritt, looking for us. He is now one of my oldest, and I believe one of my most sincere friends;—a man unequalled in the mixture of sound good sense, high literary cultivation, and the kindest and sweetest temper that ever graced a human bosom. His nieces are much attached to him, and are deserving and elegant, as well as beautiful young women.—What there is in our partiality to female beauty that commands a species of temporary homage from the aged, as well as ecstatic admiration from the young, I cannot conceive; but it is certain that a very large portion of some other amiable quality is too little to counterbalance the absolute want of this advantage. I, to whom beauty is, and shall henceforward be, a picture, still look upon it with the quiet devotion of an old worshipper, who no longer offers incense on the shrine, but peaceably presents his inch of taper, taking special care in doing so not to burn his own fingers. Nothing in life can be more ludicrous or contemptible than an old man aping the passions of his youth."

Next night Sir Walter rested at Carlisle,—“A sad place,” says the Diary, “in my domestic remembrances, since here I married my poor Charlotte. She is gone, and I am following—faster, perhaps, than I wot of. It is something to have lived and loved; and our poor children are so hopeful and affectionate that it chastens the sadness attending the thoughts of our separation.” His feeling and sprightly companion wrote thus

a day or two afterwards to her sister : “ Early in the morning before we started, papa took me with him to the Cathedral. This he had often done before ; but he said he must stand once more on the spot where he married poor mamma. After that we went to the Castle, where a new showman went through the old trick of pointing out Fergus MacIvor’s *very* dungeon. Peveril said—‘ Indeed—are you quite sure, sir ? ’ And on being told there could be no doubt, was troubled with a fit of coughing, which ended in a laugh. The man seemed exceeding indignant : so when papa moved on, I whispered who it was. I wish you had seen the man’s start, and how he stared and bowed as he parted from us ; and then rammed his keys into his pocket, and went off at a hand-gallop to warn the rest of the garrison. But the carriage was ready, and we escaped a row.”

They reached Abbotsford that night, and a day or two afterwards Edinburgh ; where Sir Walter was greeted with the satisfactory intelligence that his plans as to the *Opus Magnum* had been considered at a meeting of his trustees, and finally approved *in toto*. As the scheme inferred a large outlay on drawings and engravings, and otherwise, this decision had been looked for with much anxiety by him and Mr. Cadell. He says—“ I trust it will answer ; yet who can warrant the continuance of popularity ? Old Nattali Corri, who entered into many projects, and could never set the sails of a windmill to catch the *aura popularis*, used to say he believed that, were he to turn baker, it would put bread out of fashion. I have had the better luck to dress my sails to every wind ; and so blow on, good wind, and spin round, whirligig.” The Corri here alluded to was an unfortunate adventurer, who, among many other wild schemes, tried to set up an Italian Opera at Edinburgh.

During the remainder of this year Sir Walter never opened his “ locked book.” Whether in Edinburgh or the country, his life was such, that he describes himself, in several letters, as having become “ a writing automaton.” He had completed by Christmas the Second Series of *Tales on Scottish History*, and made considerable progress in another novel—*Anne of Geierstein* : he had also drawn up for *The Quarterly Review* his article on Hajji Baba in England ; and that delightful one on Davy’s *Salmonia*—which, like those on Planting and Gardening, abounds in sweet episodes of personal reminiscence. And, whenever he had not proof-sheets to press him, his hours were bestowed on the *Opus Magnum*.

Sir Walter’s operations appear to have been interrupted ever

and anon, during January and February, 1829, in consequence of severe distress in the household of his printer; whose warm affections were not, as in his own case, subjected to the authority of a stoical will. On February 14th the Diary says: "The letters I received were numerous, and craved answers; yet the third volume is getting on *hooly and fairly*. I am twenty leaves before the printer, but Ballantyne's wife is ill, and it is his nature to indulge apprehensions of the worst, which incapacitates him for labour. I cannot help regarding this amiable weakness of the mind with something too nearly allied to contempt." On the 17th: "I received the melancholy news that James Ballantyne had lost his wife. With his domestic habits the blow is irretrievable. What can he do, poor fellow, at the head of such a family of children? I should not be surprised if he were to give way to despair."—James was not able to appear at his wife's funeral; and this Scott viewed with something more than pity. Next morning, however, says the Diary—"Ballantyne came in, to my surprise, about twelve o'clock. He was very serious, and spoke as if he had some idea of sudden and speedy death. He has settled to go to the country, poor fellow!"—He retired accordingly to some sequestered place near Jedburgh, and there indulged his grief in solitude. Scott regarded this as weakness, and in part at least as wilful weakness, and addressed to him several letters of strong remonstrance and rebuke. In writing of the case to myself, he says—"I have a sore grievance in poor Ballantyne's increasing lowness of heart, and I fear he is sinking rapidly into the condition of a religious dreamer. His retirement from Edinburgh was the worst-advised scheme in the world. I in vain reminded him, that when our Saviour Himself was to be led into temptation, the first thing the Devil thought of was to get him into the wilderness."—Ballantyne, after a few weeks, resumed his place in the printing-office; but he addicted himself more and more to what his friend considered as erroneous and extravagant notions of religious doctrine; and I regret to say that in this difference originated a certain alienation, not of affection, but of confidence, which was visible to every near observer of their subsequent intercourse. Towards the last, indeed, they saw but little of each other. I suppose, however, it is needless to add, that down to the very last, Scott watched over Ballantyne's interests with undiminished attention.

His novel was finished before breakfast on April 29th; and his Diary mentions that immediately after breakfast he began his compendium of Scottish history for Dr. Lardner's *Cyclopædia*.

When the proprietors of that work, in July, 1828, offered him £500 for an abstract of Scottish History in one volume, he declined the proposal. They subsequently offered £700, and this was accepted; but though he began the task under the impression that he would find it a heavy one, he soon warmed to the subject, and pursued it with cordial zeal and satisfaction. One volume, it by-and-by appeared, would never do,—in his own phrase, “he must have elbow-room,”—and I believe it was finally settled that he should have £1,500 for the book in two volumes; of which the first was published before the end of this year.

Anne of Geierstein came out about the middle of May; and this, which may be almost called the last work of his imaginative genius, was received at least as well—(out of Scotland, that is)—as *The Fair Maid of Perth* had been, or indeed as any novel of his after *The Crusaders*.

His Diary has few more entries for this twelvemonth. Besides the volume of history for Lardner, he had ready by December the last of the *Scottish Series of Tales of a Grandfather*; and had made great progress in the prefaces and notes for Cadell's *Opus Magnum*. He had also overcome various difficulties which for a time interrupted the twin scheme of an illustrated edition of his Poems: and one of these in a manner honourably characteristic of the late John Murray of Albemarle Street, who had till now retained a share in the copyright of *Marmion*. Scott having requested him to *sell* that share, he generously replied: “So highly do I estimate the honour of being, even in so small a degree, the publisher of the author of the poem, that no pecuniary consideration whatever can induce me to part with it. But there is a consideration of another kind, which until now I was not aware of, which would make it painful to me if I were to retain it a moment longer. I mean the knowledge of its being required by the author, into whose hands it was spontaneously resigned in the same instant that I read his request.”

The success of the collective novels was far beyond what either Sir Walter or Mr. Cadell had ventured to anticipate. Before the close of 1829, eight volumes had been issued; and the monthly sale had reached as high as 35,000. Should this go on, there was, indeed, every reason to hope that, coming in aid of undiminished industry in the preparation of new works, it would wipe off all his load of debt in the course of a very few years. And during the autumn (which I spent near him) it was most agreeable to observe the effects of the prosperous

intelligence, which every succeeding month brought, upon his spirits.

This was the more needed, that his eldest son, who had gone to the south of France on account of some unpleasant symptoms in his health, did not at first seem to profit rapidly by the change of climate. He feared that the young man was not so obedient to his physicians as he ought to have been ; and in one of many letters on this subject, after mentioning some of Cadell's good news as to the great affair, he says—"I have wrought hard, and so far successfully. But I tell you plainly, my dear boy, that if you permit your health to decline from want of attention, I have not strength of mind enough to exert myself in these matters as I have hitherto been doing." Happily Major Scott was, ere long, restored to his usual state of health and activity.

Sir Walter himself, too, besides the usual allowance of rheumatism, and other lesser ailments, had an attack that season of a nature which gave his family great alarm, and which for several days he himself regarded with the darkest prognostications. After some weeks, during which he complained of headache and nervous irritation, certain hæmorrhages indicated the sort of relief required, and he obtained it from copious cupping. He says, in his Diary for June 3rd—"The ugly symptom still continues. Either way I am firmly resolved. I wrote in the morning. The Court kept me till near two. In the evening Dr. Ross ordered me to be cupped, an operation which I only knew from its being practised by those eminent medical practitioners the barbers of Bagdad. It is not painful ; and, I think, resembles a giant twisting about your flesh between his finger and thumb." After this he felt better, he said, than he had done for years before ; but there can be little doubt that the natural evacuation was a very serious symptom. It was, in fact, the precursor of apoplexy. In telling the Major of his recovery, he says—"The sale of the novels is pro—di—gi—ous. If it last but a few years, it will clear my feet of old incumbrances ; nay, perhaps enable me to talk a word to our friend Nicol Milne.

' But old ships must expect to get out of commission,
Nor again to weigh anchor with *yo heave ho !*'

However that may be, I should be happy to die a free man ; and I am sure you will all be kind to poor Anne, who will miss me most. I don't intend to die a minute sooner than I can help, for all this ; but when a man takes to making blood

instead of water, he is tempted to think on the possibility of his soon making earth." Mr. Milne, be it observed, was the proprietor of a considerable estate conterminous with Abbotsford to the westward.

Among a few other friends from a distance, Sir Walter received this summer a short visit from Mr. Hallam, and made in his company several of the little excursions which had in former days been of constant recurrence. Mr. Hallam had with him his son, Arthur, a young gentleman of extraordinary abilities, and as modest as able, who not long afterwards was cut off in the very bloom of opening life and genius. His beautiful verses *On Melrose seen in Company with Scott* have since been often printed.

The close of the autumn was embittered by a sudden and most unexpected deprivation. Apparently in the fullest enjoyment of health and vigour, Thomas Purdie leaned his head one evening on the table, and dropped asleep. This was nothing uncommon in a hard-working man; and his family went and came about him for several hours, without taking any notice. When supper was ready, they tried to awaken him, and found that life had been for some time extinct. Far different from other years, Sir Walter seemed impatient to get away from Abbotsford to Edinburgh. "I have lost," he writes (November 4th) to Cadell, "my old and faithful servant—my factotum—and am so much shocked, that I really wish to be quit of the country and safe in town. I have this day laid him in the grave. This has prevented my answering your letters."

The grave, close to the Abbey at Melrose, is surmounted by a modest monument, having on two sides these inscriptions:—

In grateful remembrance of the faithful and attached services of twenty-two years, and in sorrow for the loss of a humble but sincere friend, this stone was erected by Sir Walter Scott, Bart., of Abbotsford.

Here lies the body of Thomas Purdie, wood-forester at Abbotsford, who died October 29th, 1829, aged sixty-two years.—"Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."—St. Matthew, chap. xxv. ver. 21.

CHAPTER XVI

Publication of *The Ayrshire Tragedy*, *Letters on Demonology*, *Tales on the History of France*, etc.—Apoplectic Seizure—Death of George IV.—Retirement from the Court of Session—Offers of a Pension and of Additional Rank declined—Political Commotions—Fourth Epistle of *Malagrowth*—Speech on Reform at Jedburgh. 1830–1831.

AT this time, Mr. Pitcairn was editing for the Bannatyne Club that curious collection of *Ancient Scotch Criminal Trials*, which Scott reviewed in *The Quarterly* of 1831. On his arrival in Edinburgh, Mr. Pitcairn sent him a new volume in proof, requesting his attention particularly to its details on the extraordinary case of Mure of Auchindraine, A.D. 1611. Scott was so much interested with these documents, that he resolved to found a dramatic sketch on their terrible story; and the result was a composition far superior to any of his previous attempts of that nature. Indeed, there are several passages in his *Ayrshire Tragedy*—especially that where the murdered corpse floats upright in the wake of the assassin's bark (an incident suggested by a lamentable chapter in Lord Nelson's history)—which may bear comparison with anything but Shakspeare. Yet I doubt whether the prose narrative of the preface be not, on the whole, more dramatic than the versified scenes. It contains, by the way, some very striking allusions to the recent murder of Weare by Thurtell and others at Gill's Hill in Hertfordshire, and the atrocities of Burke and Hare in the West Port of Edinburgh. This piece was published in a thin octavo, early in 1830.

But he was now to pay the penalty of his unparalleled toils. On February 15th, about two o'clock in the afternoon, he returned from the Parliament House apparently in his usual state, and found an old acquaintance, Miss Young of Hawick, waiting to shew him some MS. memoirs of her father (a dissenting minister of great worth and talents), which he had undertaken to revise and correct for the press. The old lady sat by him for half an hour while he seemed to be occupied with her papers; at length he rose, as if to dismiss her, but sank down again—a slight convulsion agitated his features. After a few minutes he got up and staggered to the drawing-room, where Anne Scott and my sister, Violet Lockhart, were

sitting. They rushed to meet him, but he fell at all his length on the floor ere they could reach him. He remained speechless for about ten minutes, by which time a surgeon had arrived and bled him. He was cupped again in the evening, and gradually recovered possession of speech, and of all his faculties, in so far that, the occurrence being kept quiet, when he appeared abroad again after a short interval, people in general observed no serious change. He submitted to the utmost severity of regimen, tasting nothing but pulse and water for some weeks, and the alarm of his family and intimate friends subsided. By-and-by, he again mingled in society much as usual, and seems to have *almost* persuaded himself that the attack had proceeded merely from the stomach, though his letters continued ever and anon to drop hints that the symptoms resembled apoplexy or paralysis. When we recollect that both his father and his elder brother died of paralysis, and consider the violences of agitation and exertion to which Sir Walter had been subjected during the four preceding years, the only wonder is that this blow (which had, I suspect, several indistinct harbingers) was deferred so long; there can be none that it was soon followed by others of the same description.

He struggled manfully, however, against his malady, and during 1830 covered almost as many sheets with his MS. as in 1829. About March I find, from his correspondence with Ballantyne, that he was working regularly at his *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* for Murray's Family Library, and also on a Fourth Series of the *Tales of a Grandfather*, the subject being French History. Both of these books were published by the end of the year; and the former contains many passages worthy of his best day—little snatches of picturesque narrative and the like—in fact, transcripts of his own familiar fireside stories. The shrewdness with which evidence is sifted on legal cases attests, too, that the main reasoning faculty remained unshaken. But, on the whole, these works can hardly be submitted to a strict ordeal of criticism. There is in both a cloudiness both of words and arrangement. Nor can I speak differently of the second volume of his *Scottish History* for Lardner, which was published in May. His very pretty reviewal of Mr. Southey's Life and Edition of Bunyan was done in August—about which time his recovery seems to have reached its *acme*.

In the course of the Spring Session, circumstances rendered it highly probable that Sir Walter's resignation of his place as

Clerk of Session might be acceptable to the Government ; and it is not surprising that he should have, on the whole, been pleased to avail himself of this opportunity.

On June 26th, he heard of the death of King George IV. with the regret of a devoted and obliged subject. He had received almost immediately before, two marks of his Majesty's kind attention. Understanding that his retirement from the Court of Session was at hand, Sir William Knighton suggested that he might henceforth be more frequently in London, and that he might fitly be placed at the head of a new commission for examining and editing the MS. collections of the exiled princes of the House of Stuart, which had come into the King's hands on the death of the Cardinal of York. This Sir Walter gladly accepted, and contemplated with pleasure spending the ensuing winter in London. But another proposition, that of elevating him to the rank of Privy Councillor, was unhesitatingly declined. He desired the Lord Chief-Commissioner, whom the King had desired to ascertain his feelings on the subject, to convey his grateful thanks, with his humble apology : and his reasons are thus stated in the *Diary* of the succeeding winter : "I had also a kind communication about interfering to have me named a P. Councillor. But—besides that, when one is old and poor, one should avoid taking rank—I would be much happier if I thought any act of kindness was done to help forward Charles ; and having said so much, I made my bow, and declared my purpose of remaining satisfied with my knighthood. All this is rather pleasing. Yet much of it looks like winding up my bottom for the rest of my life."

In July came the formal intimation that he had ceased to be a Clerk of Session, and should thenceforth have, in lieu of his salary, etc. (£1,300), an allowance of £800 per annum. This was accompanied by an intimation from the Home Secretary, that the Ministers were quite ready to grant him a pension covering the reduction of his income. Considering himself as the bond-slave of his creditors, he made known to them this proposition, and stated that it would be extremely painful to him to accept of it ; and with the delicacy and generosity which throughout characterised their conduct towards him, they without hesitation entreated him on no account to do injury to his own feelings in such a matter as this. Few things gave him more pleasure than this handsome communication.

Just after he had taken leave of Edinburgh, as he seems to have thought for ever, he received a communication of

another sort, as inopportune as any that ever reached him. His Diary for July 13th says briefly—"I have a letter from a certain young gentleman, announcing that his sister had so far mistaken the intentions of a lame baronet nigh sixty years old, as to suppose him only prevented by modesty from stating certain wishes and hopes, etc. The party is a woman of rank, so my vanity may be satisfied. But I excused myself, with little picking upon the terms."

During the rest of the summer and autumn his daughter and I were at Chiefswood, and saw him of course daily. Laidlaw, too, had been restored to the cottage at Kaeside; and though Tom Purdie made a dismal blank, old habits went on, and the course of life seemed little altered from what it had used to be. He looked jaded and worn before evening set in, yet very seldom departed from the strict regimen of his doctors, and often brightened up to all his former glee, though passing the bottle and sipping toast and water.

In the ensuing month (October, 1830) the dethroned King of France, Charles X., was invited by the English Government to resume his old quarters at Holyrood; and among many other things that about this time mortified Scott, none gave him more pain than to hear that the popular feeling in Edinburgh had been so much exacerbated against the fallen monarch (especially by an ungenerous article in the great literary organ of the place), that his reception there was likely to be rough and insulting. Sir Walter thought that on such an occasion his voice might, perhaps, be listened to. He knew his countrymen well in their strength, as well as in their weakness, and put forth in Ballantyne's newspaper for October 20th, a manly appeal to their better feelings—closing in these words: "The person who writes these few lines is leaving his native city, never to return as a permanent resident. He has some reason to be proud of distinctions received from his fellow-citizens; and he has not the slightest doubt that the taste and good feeling of those whom he will still term so, will dictate to them the quiet, civil, and respectful tone of feeling, which will do honour both to their heads and their hearts, which have seldom been appealed to in vain.—The Frenchman Melinet, in mentioning the refuge afforded by Edinburgh to Henry VI. in his distress, records it as the most hospitable town in Europe. It is a testimony to be proud of, and sincerely do I hope there is little danger of forfeiting it upon the present occasion."

The effect of this admonition was even more complete than the writer had anticipated. The royal exiles were received with perfect decorum, which their modest bearing to all classes, and unobtrusive, though magnificent benevolence to the poor, ere long converted into a feeling of deep and affectionate respectfulness. During their stay in Scotland, the King took more than one opportunity of conveying to Sir Walter his gratitude for this salutary interference on his behalf.

Towards the end of November, Sir Walter had another slight touch of apoplexy. He recovered himself without assistance; but again consulted his physicians in Edinburgh, and by their advice adopted a still greater severity of regimen.

The reader will now understand what his frame and condition of health and spirits were, when he at length received from Ballantyne a decided protest against the novel on which he was struggling to fix the shattered energies of his memory and fancy. He replied thus:—

" *Abbotsford, December 8th, 1830.*

"MY DEAR JAMES,—If I were like other authors, as I flatter myself I am not, I should 'send you an order on my treasurer for a hundred ducats, wishing you all prosperity and a little more taste;' * but having never supposed that any abilities I ever had were of a perpetual texture, I am glad when friends tell me what I might be long in finding out myself. Mr. Cadell will shew you what I have written to him. My present idea is to go abroad for a few months, if I hold together as long. So ended the Fathers of the Novel—Fielding and Smollett—and it would be no unprofessional finish for yours—W. S."

This note to the printer, and a letter of the same date and strain to the publisher, "struck both," Mr. Cadell says, "with dismay." They resolved to go out to Abbotsford, but not for a few days, because a general meeting of the creditors was at hand, and there was reason to hope that its results would enable them to appear as the bearers of sundry pieces of good news. Meantime, Sir Walter himself rallied considerably, and resolved, by way of testing his powers, while the novel hung suspended, to write a fourth epistle of *Malachi Malagrowther* on the public affairs of the period. The announcement of a political dissertation, at such a moment of universal excitement, and from a hand already trembling under the misgivings of a fatal malady, might well have filled Cadell and Ballantyne with new "dismay," even had they both been prepared to adopt, in the fullest extent, such views of the dangers of our state, and the remedies for them, as their friend was likely to dwell

* Archbishop of Grenada, in *Gil Blas*.

upon. They agreed that whatever they could safely do to avert this experiment must be done. Indeed, they were both equally anxious to find, if it could be found, the means of withdrawing him from all literary labour, save only that of annotating his former novels. But they were not the only persons who had been, and then were, exerting all their art for that same purpose. His kind and skilful physicians, Doctors Abercrombie and Ross of Edinburgh, had over and over preached the same doctrine, and assured him, that if he persisted in working his brain, nothing could prevent his malady from recurring ere long in redoubled severity. He answered—"As for bidding me not work, Molly might as well put the kettle on the fire and say, *Now, don't boil.*" To myself, when I ventured to address him in a similar strain, he replied—"I understand you, and I thank you from my heart, but I must tell you at once how it is with me. I am not sure that I am quite myself in all things; but I am sure that in one point there is no change. I mean, that I foresee distinctly that if I were to be idle I should go mad. In comparison to this, death is no risk to shrink from."

The meeting of trustees and creditors took place on the 17th—Mr. George Forbes (brother to the late Sir William) in the chair. There was then announced another dividend on the Ballantyne estate of three shillings in the pound—thus reducing the original amount of the debt to about £54,000. It had been not unnaturally apprehended that the convulsed state of politics might have checked the sale of the *Magnum Opus*; but this does not seem to have been the case to any extent worth notice. The meeting was numerous—and, not contented with a renewed vote of thanks to their debtor, they passed unanimously a resolution, which was moved by Mr. (now Sir James) Gibson-Craig, and seconded by Mr. Thomas Allan—both, by the way, leading Whigs: "That Sir Walter Scott be requested to accept of his furniture, plate, linens, paintings, library, and curiosities of every description, as the best means the creditors have of expressing their very high sense of his most honourable conduct, and in grateful acknowledgment for the unparalleled and most successful exertions he has made, and continues to make, for them."

On the 18th, Cadell and Ballantyne proceeded to Abbotsford, and found Sir Walter in a placid state—having evidently been much soothed and gratified with the tidings from Mr. Forbes. His whole appearance was greatly better than they had

ventured to anticipate ; and deferring literary questions till the morning, he made this gift from his creditors the chief subject of his conversation. He said it had taken a heavy load off his mind ; he apprehended that, even if his future works should produce little money, the profits of the *Magnum*, during a limited number of years, with the sum which had been insured on his life, would be sufficient to obliterate the remaining part of the Ballantyne debt : he considered the library and museum now conveyed to him as worth at the least £10,000, and this would enable him to make some provision for his younger children. He said that he designed to execute his last will without delay, and detailed to his friends all the particulars which the document ultimately embraced. He mentioned to them that he had recently received, through the Lord Chief-Commissioner Adam, a message from the new King, intimating his Majesty's disposition to keep in mind his late brother's kind intentions with regard to Charles Scott ;—and altogether his talk, though grave, and on grave topics, was the reverse of melancholy.

The next entry of the Diary has these sentences : "Ever since my fall in February, it is very certain that I have seemed to speak with an impediment. To add to this, I have the constant increase of my lameness—the thigh-joint, knee-joint, and ankle-joint. I move with great pain in the whole limb, and am at every minute, during an hour's walk, reminded of my mortality. I should not care for all this, if I were sure of dying handsomely ; and Cadell's calculations might be sufficiently firm, though the author of *Waverley* had pulled on his last nightcap. Nay, they might be even more trustworthy, if remains, and memoirs, and suchlike, were to give a zest to the posthumous. But the fear is, lest the blow be not sufficient to destroy life, and that I should linger on, 'a driveller and a show.' " *

On January 31st, Miss Scott being too unwell for a journey, Sir Walter went alone to Edinburgh for the purpose of executing his last will. He (for the first time in his native town) took up his quarters at an hotel ; but the noise of the street disturbed him during the night (another evidence how much his nervous system had been shattered), and next day he was persuaded to remove to his bookseller's house in Athol Crescent. In the apartment allotted to him there, he found several little pieces of furniture which some kind person had purchased for him at the sale in Castle Street, and which he presented to Mrs. Cadell.

* Johnson, *Vanity of Human Wishes*.

"Here," says his letter to Mrs. Lockhart, "I saw various things that belonged to poor No. 39. I had many sad thoughts on seeing and handling them—but they are in kind keeping, and I was glad they had not gone to strangers."

On February 4th, the will was signed, and attested by Nicolson,* to whom Sir Walter explained the nature of the document, adding, "I deposit it for safety in Mr. Cadell's hands, and I still hope it may be long before he has occasion to produce it." Poor Nicolson was much agitated, but stammered out a deep *amen*.

Of this excursion the Diary says: "*Abbotsford, February 9.*—The snow became impassable, and in Edinburgh I remained immovably fixed for ten days, never getting out of doors, save once or twice to dinner, when I went and returned in a sedan-chair. Cadell made a point of my coming to his excellent house, where I had no less excellent an apartment, and the most kind treatment; that is, no making a show of me, for which I was in but bad tune. Abercrombie and Ross had me bled with cupping-glasses, reduced me confoundedly, and restricted me of all creature comforts. But they did me good, as I am sure they sincerely meant to do; I got rid of a giddy feeling which I had been plagued with, and have certainly returned much better. I did not neglect my testamentary affairs. I executed my last will, leaving Walter burdened with £1,000 to Sophia, £2,000 to Anne, and the same to Charles. He is to advance them this money if they want it; if not, to pay them interest. All this is his own choice, otherwise I would have sold the books and rattletraps. I have made provisions for clearing my estate by my publications, should it be possible; and should that prove possible, from the time of such clearance being effected, to be a fund available to all my children who shall be alive or leave representatives. My bequests must, many of them, seem hypothetical."

At the beginning of March, he was anew roused about political affairs; and bestowed four days in drawing up an address against the Reform Bill, which he designed to be adopted by the Freeholders of the Forest. They, however, preferred a shorter one from the pen of a plain practical country gentleman (the late Mr. Elliot Lockhart of Borthwickbrae), who had often represented them in Parliament: and Sir Walter, it is probable, felt this disappointment more acutely than he has chosen to indicate in his Journal.

* Sir Walter Scott's butler.

"*March 11.*—This day we had our meeting at Selkirk. I found Borthwickbrae had sent the frame of an address. It was the reverse of mine in every respect. As I saw that it met the ideas of the meeting (six in number) better by far than mine, I instantly put that in my pocket. It gives me a right to decline future interference, and let the world wag—'Transeat cum cæteris erroribus.'—I will make my opinion public at every place where I shall be called upon or expected to appear; but I will not thrust myself forward again. May the Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this vow!"

He kept it in all parts. Though urged to take up his pen against the Reform Bill, by several persons of high consequence, who of course little knew his real condition of health, he resolutely refused to make any such experiment again. But he was equally resolved to be absent from no meeting at which, as Sheriff or Deputy-Lieutenant, he might naturally be expected to appear in his place, and record his aversion to the Bill. The first of these meetings was one of the freeholders of Roxburgh, held at Jedburgh on March 21st, and there, to the distress and alarm of his daughter, he insisted on being present, and proposing one of the Tory resolutions,—which he did in a speech of some length, but delivered in a tone so low, and with such hesitation in utterance, that only a few detached passages were intelligible to the bulk of the audience.

CHAPTER XVII

Apoplectic Paralysis—Election scenes at Jedburgh—*Castle Dangerous* begun—Excursion to Douglasdale—Visits of Captain Burns and Wordsworth—Departure from Abbotsford—London—Voyage in the *Barham*—Naples—Rome—Note by Mr. E. Cheney.
1831-1832.

AFTER a pause of some days, the Diary has this entry for April 25th, 1831: "From Saturday, 16th April, to Saturday, 24th of the same month, unpleasantly occupied by ill health and its consequences. A distinct stroke of paralysis affecting both my nerves and speech, though beginning only on Monday with a very bad cold. Doctor Abercrombie was brought out by the friendly care of Cadell,—but young Clarkson had already done the needful, that is, had bled and blistered, and placed me on a very reduced diet. Whether precautions have been taken

in time, I cannot tell. I think they have, though severe in themselves, beat the disease ; but I am alike prepared."

The preceding paragraph has been deciphered with difficulty. The blow which it records was greatly more severe than any that had gone before it. Sir Walter's friend Lord Meadowbank had come to Abbotsford, as usual when on the Jedburgh circuit ; and he would make an effort to receive the Judge in something of the old style of the place ; he collected several of the neighbouring gentry to dinner, and tried to bear his wonted part in the conversation. Feeling his strength and spirits flagging, he was tempted to violate his physician's directions, and took two or three glasses of champagne, not having tasted wine for several months before. On retiring to his dressing-room he had this severe shock of apoplectic paralysis, and kept his bed under the surgeon's hands for several days.

On my arrival (May 10th), I found Sir Walter to have rallied considerably ; yet his appearance, as I first saw him, was the most painful sight I had ever then seen. Knowing at what time I might be expected, he had been lifted on his pony, and advanced about half a mile on the Selkirk road to meet me. He moved at a foot-pace, with Laidlaw at one stirrup, and his forester Swanston (a fine fellow, who did all he could to replace Tom Purdie) at the other. Abreast was old Peter Mathieson on horseback, with one of my children astride before him on a pillion. Sir Walter had had his head shaved, and wore a black silk night-cap under his blue bonnet. All his garments hung loose about him ; his countenance was thin and haggard, and there was an obvious distortion in the muscles of one cheek. His look, however, was placid—his eye as bright as ever—perhaps brighter than it ever was in health ; he smiled with the same affectionate gentleness, and though at first it was not easy to understand everything he said, he spoke cheerfully and manfully.

He had resumed, and was trying to recast, his novel. All the medical men had urged him, by every argument, to abstain from any such attempts ; but he smiled on them in silence, or answered with some jocular rhyme. One note has this postscript—a parody on a sweet lyric of Burns :—

"Dour, dour, and eident was he,
Dour and eident but-and-ben—
Dour against their barley-water,
And eident on the Bramah pen."

He told me, that in the winter he had more than once tried

writing with his own hand, because he had no longer the same "pith and birr" that formerly rendered dictation easy to him; but that the experiment failed. He was now sensible he could do nothing without Laidlaw to hold the Bramah pen; adding, "Willie is a kind clerk—I see by his looks when I am pleasing him, and that pleases me." And however the cool critic may now estimate *Count Robert*, no one who then saw the author could wonder that Laidlaw's prevalent feeling in writing those pages should have been admiration. Under the full consciousness that he had sustained three or four strokes of apoplexy or palsy, or both combined, and tortured by various attendant ailments—cramp, rheumatism in half his joints, daily increasing lameness, and now of late gravel (which was, though last, not least)—he retained all the energy of his will, struggled manfully against this sea of troubles, and might well have said seriously, as he more than once both said and wrote playfully,

"'Tis not in mortals to command success,
But we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll deserve it."

In the family circle Sir Walter seldom spoke of his illness at all, and when he did, it was always in the hopeful strain. In private to Laidlaw and myself, his language corresponded exactly with the tone of the Diary—he expressed his belief that the chances of recovery were few—very few—but always added, that he considered it his duty to exert what faculties remained to him, for the sake of his creditors, to the very last. "I am very anxious," he repeatedly said to me, "to be done, one way or other, with this *Count Robert*, and a little story about the *Castle Dangerous*, which also I had long had in my head—but after that I will attempt nothing more—at least not until I have finished all the notes for the novels, etc.; for, in case of my going off at the next slap, you would naturally have to take up that job,—and where could you get at all my old wives' stories?"

I felt the sincerest pity for Cadell and Ballantyne at this time, and advised him to lay *Count Robert* aside for a few weeks at all events, until the general election now going on should be over. He consented—but immediately began another series of Tales on French History—which he never completed.

On May 18th, I witnessed a scene which must dwell painfully on many memories besides mine. The rumours of brick-bat and bludgeon work at the hustings of this month were so

prevalent, that Sir Walter's family, and not less zealously the Tory candidate (Henry Scott, heir of Harden, now Lord Polwarth), tried every means to dissuade him from attending the election for Roxburghshire. We thought overnight that we had succeeded, and indeed, as the result of the vote was not at all doubtful, there could be no good reason for his appearing on this occasion. About seven in the morning, however, when I came downstairs intending to ride over to Jedburgh, I found he had countermanded my horse, ordered his chariot to the door, and was already impatient to be off for the scene of action. We found the town in a most tempestuous state : in fact, it was almost wholly in the hands of a disciplined rabble, chiefly weavers from Hawick, who marched up and down with drums and banners, and then, after filling the Court-hall, lined the streets, grossly insulting every one who did not wear the reforming colours. Sir Walter's carriage, as it advanced towards the house of the Shortrede family, was pelted with stones ; one or two fell into it, but none touched him. He breakfasted with the widow and children of his old friend, and then walked to the Hall between me and one of the young Shortredes. He was saluted with groans and blasphemies all the way—and I blush to add that a woman spat upon him from a window ; but this last contumely I think he did not observe. The scene within was much what has been described under the date of March 21st, except that though he attempted to speak from the Bench, not a word was audible, such was the frenzy. Young Harden was returned by a great majority, 40 to 19, and we then with difficulty gained the inn where the carriage had been put up. But the aspect of the street was by that time such, that several of the gentlemen on the Whig side came and entreated us not to attempt starting from the front of our inn. One of them, Captain Russell Eliott of the Royal Navy, lived in the town, or rather in a villa adjoining it, to the rear of the Spread Eagle. Sir Walter was at last persuaded to accept this courteous adversary's invitation, and accompanied him through some winding lanes to his residence. Peter Mathieson by and by brought the carriage thither, in the same clandestine method, and we escaped from Jedburgh—with one shower more of stones at the Bridge.

No doubt these disturbances of the general election had an unfavourable influence on the invalid. When they were over, he grew calmer and more collected ; his speech became, after a little time, much clearer, and such were the symptoms of

energy still about him, that I began to think a restoration not hopeless. Some business called me to London about the middle of June, and when I returned at the end of three weeks, I had the satisfaction to find that he had been gradually amending.

But, alas ! the first use he made of this partial renovation, had been to expose his brain once more to an imaginative task. He began his *Castle Dangerous*—the ground-work being again an old story which he had told in print, many years before, in a rapid manner. And now, for the first time, he left Ballantyne out of his secret. He thus writes to Cadell on July 3rd : “I intend to tell this little matter to nobody but Lockhart. Perhaps not even to him ; certainly not to J. B., who having turned his back on his old political friends, will no longer have a claim to be a secretary in such matters, though I shall always be glad to befriend him.” James’s criticisms on *Count Robert* had wounded him—the Diary, already quoted, shews how severely. The last visit this old ally ever paid at Abbotsford, occurred a week or two after. His newspaper had by this time espoused openly the cause of the Reform Bill—and some unpleasant conversation took place on that subject, which might well be a sore one for both parties—and not least, considering the whole of his personal history, for Mr. Ballantyne. Next morning, being Sunday, he disappeared abruptly, without saying farewell ; and when Scott understood that he had signified an opinion that the reading of the Church service, with a sermon from South or Barrow, would be a poor substitute for the mystical eloquence of some new idol down the vale, he expressed considerable disgust. They never met again in this world. In truth, Ballantyne’s health also was already much broken ; and if Scott had been entirely himself, he would not have failed to connect that circumstance in a charitable way with this never strong-minded man’s recent abandonment of his own old *terra firma*, both religious and political. But this is a subject on which we have no title to dwell. Sir Walter’s misgivings about himself, if I read him aright, now rendered him desirous of external support ; but this his spirit would fain suppress and disguise even from itself. When I again saw him on the 13th of this month, he shewed me several sheets of the new romance, and told me how he had designed at first to have it printed by somebody else than Ballantyne, but that, on reflection, he had shrunk from hurting his feelings on so tender a point. I found,

however, that he had neither invited nor received any opinion from James as to what he had written, but that he had taken an alarm lest he should fall into some blunder about the scenery fixed on (which he had never seen but once when a schoolboy), and had kept the sheets in proof until I should come back and accompany him in a short excursion to Lanarkshire. He was anxious in particular to see the tombs in the Church of St. Bride, adjoining the site of his "Castle Dangerous," of which Mr. Blore had shewn him drawings; and he hoped to pick up some of the minute traditions, in which he had always delighted, among the inhabitants of Douglasdale.

We set out early on the 18th, and ascended the Tweed, passing in succession Yair, Ashestiel, Innerleithen, Traquair, and many more scenes dear to his early life, and celebrated in his writings.

For two or three weeks after our return to Abbotsford he bent himself sedulously to his task—and concluded both *Castle Dangerous* and the long-suspended *Count Robert*. By this time he had submitted to the recommendation of all his medical friends, and agreed to spend the coming winter away from Abbotsford, among new scenes, in a more genial climate, and above all (so he promised), in complete abstinence from all literary labour. When Captain Basil Hall understood that he had resolved on wintering at Naples (where, as has been mentioned, his son Charles was attached to the British Legation), it occurred to the zealous sailor that on such an occasion as this all thoughts of political difference ought to be dismissed—and he, unknown to Scott, addressed a letter to Sir James Graham, then First Lord of the Admiralty, stating the condition of his friend's health, and his proposed plan, and suggesting that it would be a fit and graceful thing for the King's Government to place a frigate at his disposal. Sir James replied that it afforded his Royal Master, as well as himself, the sincerest satisfaction to comply with this hint; and that whenever Sir Walter found it convenient to come southwards, a vessel should be prepared for his reception. Nothing could be handsomer than the way in which all this matter was arranged, and Scott, deeply gratified, exclaimed that things were yet in the hands of gentlemen; but that he feared they had been undermining the state of society which required such persons as themselves to be at the head.

He had no wish, however, to leave Abbotsford until the

approach of winter ; and having dismissed his Tales, seemed to say to himself that he would enjoy his dear valley for the intervening weeks, draw friends about him, revisit all the familiar scenes in his neighbourhood once more ; and if he were never to come back, store himself with the most agreeable recollections in his power, and so conduct himself as to bequeath to us who surrounded him a last stock of gentle impressions. He continued to work a little at his notes and prefaces, the *Reliquiæ* of Oldbuck, and a private tome entitled *Sylva Abbotsfordiensis*, but did not fatigue himself ; and when once all plans were settled, and all cares in so far as possible set aside, his health and spirits certainly rallied most wonderfully.

He had the gratification of a visit from Mr. Adolphus, and accompanied him one day as far as Oakwood and the Linns of Ettrick. He also received and made several little excursions with the great artist, Turner, whose errand to Scotland was connected with the collective edition of his Poems. One morning, in particular, he carried Mr. Turner, with Mr. Skene and myself, to Smailholm Crag ; and it was in lounging about them, while the painter did his sketch that he told his "kind Samaritan" how the habit of lying on the turf there among the sheep and lambs, when a lame infant, had given his mind a peculiar tenderness for those animals, which it had ever since retained. He seemed to enjoy the scene of his childhood—yet there was many a touch of sadness both in his eye and his voice. He then carried us to Dryburgh, but excused himself from attending Mr. Turner into the enclosure. Skene and I perceived that it would be better for us to leave him alone, and we both accompanied Turner. Lastly, the painter must not omit Bemerside. The good laird and lady were of course flattered, and after walking about a little while among the huge old trees that surround their tower, we ascended to, I think, the third tier of its vaulted apartments, and had luncheon in a stately hall, arched also in stone, but with well-sized windows (as being out of harm's way) duly blazoned with shields and crests, and the time-honoured motto, BETIDE, BETIDE—being the first words of a prophetic couplet ascribed to Thomas the Rhymer :—

"Betide, betide, whate'er betide,
There shall be Haigs in Bemerside."

Mr. Turner's sketch of this picturesque Peel, and its

"brotherhood of venerable trees," is probably familiar to most of my readers.

Very near the end there came some unexpected things to cast a sunset brilliancy over Abbotsford. His son, the Major, arrived with tidings that he had obtained leave of absence from his regiment, and should be in readiness to sail with his father. This was a mighty relief to us all, on Miss Scott's account as well as his, for my occupations did not permit me to think of going with him, and there was no other near connexion at hand. But Sir Walter was delighted—indeed, dearly as he loved all his children, he had a pride in the Major that stood quite by itself, and the hearty approbation which looked through his eyes whenever turned on him, sparkled brighter than ever as his own physical strength decayed. Young Walter had on this occasion sent down a horse or two to winter at Abbotsford. One was a remarkably tall and handsome animal, jet black all over, and when the Major appeared on it one morning, equipped for a little sport with the greyhounds, Sir Walter insisted on being put upon Douce Davy, and conducted as far as the Cauldshields Loch to see the day's work begun. He halted on the high bank to the north of the lake, and I remained to hold his bridle, in case of any frisk on the part of the Covenanter at the "tumult great of dogs and men." We witnessed a very pretty chase or two on the opposite side of the water—but his eye followed always the tall black steed and his rider. The father might well assure Lady Davy, that "a handsomer fellow never put foot into stirrup." But when he took a very high wall of loose stones, at which everybody else *craned*, as easily and elegantly as if it had been a puddle in his stride, the old man's rapture was extreme. "Look at him!" said he—"only look at him! Now, isn't he a fine fellow?" This was the last time, I believe, that Sir Walter mounted on horseback.

On September 17th the old splendour of Abbotsford was, after a long interval, and for the last time, revived. Captain James Glencairn Burns, son of the poet, had come home from India, and Sir Walter invited him (with his wife, and their cicerones Mr. and Mrs. M'Diarmid of Dumfries) to spend a day under his roof. The neighbouring gentry were assembled, and having his son to help him, Sir Walter did most gracefully the honours of the table.

On the 20th Mrs. Lockhart set out for London to prepare for her father's reception there; and on the following day Mr. Wordsworth and his daughter arrived from Westmoreland to

take farewell of him. This was a very fortunate circumstance : nothing could have gratified Sir Walter more, or sustained him better, if he needed any support from without. On the 22nd—his arrangements being all completed, and Laidlaw having received a paper of instructions, the last article of which repeats the caution to be “very careful of the dogs”—these two great poets, who had through life loved each other well, and, in spite of very different theories as to art, appreciated each other’s genius more justly than inferior spirits ever did either of them, spent the morning together in a visit to Newark. Hence *Yarrow Revisited*—the last of the three poems by which Wordsworth has connected his name to all time with the most romantic of Scottish streams.

Sitting that evening in the library, Sir Walter said a good deal about the singularity that Fielding and Smollett had both been driven abroad by declining health, and never returned ;—which circumstance, though his language was rather cheerful at this time, he had often before alluded to in a darker fashion ; and Mr. Wordsworth expressed his regret that neither of those great masters of romance appeared to have been surrounded with any due marks of respect in the close of life. I happened to observe that Cervantes, on his last journey to Madrid, met with an incident which seemed to have given him no common satisfaction. Sir Walter did not remember the passage, and desired me to find it out in the life by Pellicer which was at hand, and translate it. I did so, and he listened with lively though pensive interest. Our friend Allan, the historical painter, had also come out that day from Edinburgh, and he since told me that he remembers nothing he ever saw with so much sad pleasure as the attitudes and aspect of Scott and Wordsworth as the story went on. Mr. Wordsworth was at that time, I should notice—though indeed his noble stanzas tell it—in but a feeble state of general health. He was, moreover, suffering so much from some malady in his eyes, that he wore a deep green shade over them. Thus he sat between Sir Walter and his daughter : *absit omen*—but it was no wonder that Allan thought as much of Milton as of Cervantes. The anecdote of the young student’s raptures on discovering that he had been riding all day with the author of *Don Quixote*, is introduced in the Preface to *Count Robert and Castle Dangerous*, which—(for I may not return to the subject)—came out at the close of November in four volumes, as the Fourth Series of *Tales of My Landlord*.

The following sonnet was, no doubt, composed by Mr. Wordsworth that same evening :—

"A trouble, not of clouds, or weeping rain,
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light
Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple height :
Spirits of power assembled there complain
For kindred power departing from their sight ;
While Tweed, best pleased in chanting a blithe strain,
Saddens his voice again, and yet again.
Lift up your hearts, ye mourners ! for the might
Of the whole world's good wishes with him goes ;
Blessings and prayers, in nobler retinue
Than sceptred King or laurelled Conqueror knows,
Follow this wondrous potentate. Be true,
Ye winds of Ocean, and the Midland Sea,
Wafting your charge to soft Parthenope."

Early on September 23rd, 1831, Sir Walter left Abbotsford, attended by his daughter Anne and myself, and we reached London by easy stages on the 28th, having spent one day at Rokeby.

Sir Walter arrived in London in the midst of the Lords' debates on the second Reform Bill, and the ferocious demonstrations of the populace on its rejection were in part witnessed by him. He saw the houses of several of the chief Tories, and above all, that of the Duke of Wellington, shattered and almost sacked. He heard of violence offered to the persons of some of his own noble friends ; and having been invited to attend the christening of the infant heir of Buccleuch, whose godfather the King had proposed to be, he had the pain to understand that the ceremony must be adjourned, because it was not considered safe for his Majesty to visit, for such a purpose, the palace of one of his most amiable as well as illustrious peers.

During his stay, which was till October 23rd, Sir Walter called on many of his old friends ; but he accepted of no hospitalities except breakfasting once with Sir Robert Inglis on Clapham Common, and twice with Lady Gifford at Roehampton. Usually he worked a little in the morning at notes for the *Magnum*.

Before quitting home Scott had directed a humble monument to be prepared for the grave of Helen Walker, the original of Jeanie Deans, in the churchyard of Irongray. On October 18th he penned the epitaph now inscribed there—and also the pathetic farewell in the last page of the Preface to *Count Robert of Paris*.

On October 19th, the Hon. Henry Duncan, R.N., store-keeper of the Ordnance, who had taken a great deal of trouble in arranging matters for the voyage, called on Sir Walter to introduce to him Captain, now Sir Hugh Pigot, the commanding-officer of the *Barham*—who expected to sail on the 24th.

On December 17th the *Barham* reached Naples, and Sir Walter found his son Charles (who was in the service of the British Embassy at Naples) ready to receive him. The quarantine was cut short by the courtesy of the King, and the travellers established themselves in an apartment of the Palazzo Caramanico. Here, again, the British Minister, Mr. Hill (now Lord Berwick), and the English nobility and gentry then residing in Naples, did whatever kindness and respect could suggest; nor were the natives less attentive. The Marquis of Hertford, the Hon. Keppel Craven, the Hon. William Ashley and his lady, Sir George Talbot, the venerable Matthias (author of *The Pursuits of Literature*), Mr. Auldjo (celebrated for his ascent of Mont Blanc), and Dr. Hogg, who has since published an account of his travels in the East—appear to have, in their various ways, contributed whatever they could to his comfort and amusement. But the person of whom he saw most was the late Sir William Gell, who had long been condemned to live in Italy by ailments and infirmities not dissimilar to his own.

Though he remained here until the middle of April, the reader will pardon me for giving but few of the details to which I have had access. He was immediately elected into the chief literary societies of the place; and the King gave him unusual facilities in the use of all its libraries and museums. An ancient MS. of the Romance of Sir Bevis of Hampton being pointed out to him, he asked and obtained permission to have a transcript; and one was executed in his own apartments. He also expressed great curiosity as to the local ballads and popular tracts, chiefly occupied with the exploits of bandits, and collected enough of them to form about a dozen volumes, which he took a fancy to have bound in vellum. Sir William Gell was his cicerone to most of the celebrated spots in the city and its vicinity—but soon discovered that he felt comparatively little interest in anything that he saw, unless he could connect it somehow with traditions or legends of mediæval history or romance, or trace some resemblance to the scenery of familiar associations at home. Thus, amidst the chestnut forest near Pæston, he was heard repeating *Jock of Hazeldean*—and again, in looking down on the Lucrine Lake, Baiæ, Misenum, and

Averno, he suddenly pronounced, "in a grave tone and with great emphasis," some fragment of a Jacobite ditty—

"'Tis up the rocky mountain and down the mossy glen,
We darena gang a milking for Charlie and his men."

At Pompeii alone did his thoughts seem to be wholly commanded by the realities before him. There he had himself carried from house to house, and examined everything leisurely; but said little, except ever and anon in an audible whisper, "The city of the dead—the city of the dead!"

Meantime he more and more lost sight of the necessary restrictions—resumed too much of the usual habits in participating of splendid hospitalities, and, worst of all, resumed his pen. No persuasion could arrest him. He wrote several small tales, the subjects taken from the Newgate history of the Neapolitan banditti; and covered many quires with chapter after chapter of a romance connected with the Knights of St. John.

The MS. of these painful days is hardly to be deciphered by any effort; but he often spoke as well pleased with what he was doing, and confident that, on reaching Scotland again, he should have produced welcome materials for the press—though on many other occasions his conversation intimated apprehensions of a far different order, and he not only prognosticated that his end was near, but expressed alarm that he might not live to finish the journey homewards.

From this time, whoever was near him often heard, that when he reached Scotland, it would be to re-enter on the unfettered use and administration of his estate. He even wrote to Mrs. Scott of Harden bespeaking her presence at a little festival which he designed to hold within a few months at Abbotsford, in celebration of his release from all difficulties. All this while he sent letters frequently to his daughter Sophia, Mr. Cadell, Mr. Laidlaw, and myself. Some were of a very melancholy cast—for the dream about his debts was occasionally broken: in general, however, these his last letters tell the same story of delusive hopes both as to health and wealth, of satisfaction in the resumption of his pen, of eagerness to be once more at Abbotsford, and of affectionate anxiety about the friends he was there to rejoin. Every one of those to Laidlaw has something about the poor people and the dogs. One to myself conveyed his desire that he might be set down for "something as handsome as I liked" in a subscription then

thought of for the Ettrick Shepherd ; who that spring visited London, and was in no respect improved by his visit. Another to my wife bade her purchase a grand pianoforte which he wished to present to Miss Cadell, his bookseller's daughter. The same generous spirit was shown in many other communications.

It had been his intention not to leave the Mediterranean without seeing Rhodes himself—but he suddenly dropped this scheme, on learning that his friend Sir Frederick Adam, Governor of the Ionian Islands, who had invited him to Corfu, was ordered to India. From that hour his whole thoughts were fixed on home—and his companions soon ceased from opposing his inclinations. Miss Scott was no doubt the more willing to yield, as having received intelligence of the death of her nephew, the "Hugh Littlejohn" of the *Grandfather's Tales*—which made her anxious about her sister. But indeed, since her father would again work, what good end could it serve to keep him from working at his own desk ? And since all her entreaties, and the warnings of foreign doctors, proved alike unavailing as to the regulation of his diet, what remaining chance could there be on that score, unless from replacing him under the eye of the friendly physicians whose authority had formerly seemed to have due influence on his mind ? He had wished to return by the route of the Tyrol and Germany, partly for the sake of the remarkable chapel and monuments of the old Austrian princes at Inspruck, and the feudal ruins upon the Rhine, but chiefly that he might have an interview with Goethe at Weimar. That poet died on March 22nd, and the news seemed to act upon Scott exactly as the illness of Borthwickbrae had done in the August before. His impatience redoubled : all his fine dreams of recovery seemed to vanish at once—"Alas for Goethe !" he exclaimed : "but he at least died at home—Let us to Abbotsford." And he quotes more than once in his letters the first hemistic of the line from Politian with which he had closed his early memoir of Leyden—" *Grata quies patriæ.*"

When the season was sufficiently advanced, then, the party set out, Mr. Charles Scott having obtained leave to accompany his father ; which was quite necessary, as his elder brother had already been obliged to rejoin his regiment. They quitted Naples on April 16th, in an open barouche, which could at pleasure be converted into a bed. Sir Walter was somewhat interested by a few of the objects presented to him in the

earlier stages of his route. The certainty that he was on his way home, for a time soothed and composed him ; and amidst the agreeable society which again surrounded him on his arrival in Rome, he seemed perhaps as much of himself as he had ever been in Malta or in Naples. For a moment even his literary hope and ardour appear to have revived. But still his daughter entertained no doubt, that his consenting to pause for even a few days in Rome, was dictated mainly by consideration of her natural curiosity. Gell went to Rome about the same time ; and Sir Walter was introduced there to another accomplished countryman, who exerted himself no less than did Sir William, to render his stay agreeable to him. This was Mr. Edward Cheney—whose family had long been on terms of very strict intimacy with the Maclean Clephanes of Torloisk, so that Sir Walter was ready to regard him at first sight as a friend. Nor was it a small circumstance that the Cheney family had then in their occupancy the Villa Muti at Frascati, for many of his later years the favourite abode of the Cardinal York.

At Rome, Sir Walter partook of the hospitalities of the native nobility, many of whom had travelled into Scotland under the influence of his writings, and on one or two occasions was well enough to sustain their best impressions of him by his conversation. But, on the whole, his feebleness, and incapacity to be roused by objects which, in other days, would have appealed most powerfully to his imagination, were too painfully obvious : and, indeed, the only, or almost the only very lively curiosity he appeared to feel regarded the family pictures and other Stuart relics then preserved at the Villa Muti—but especially the monument to Charles Edward and his father in St. Peter's, the work of Canova, executed at the cost of George IV. Excepting his visits at Frascati, the only excursion he made into the neighbouring country was one to the grand old castle of Bracciano : where he spent a night in the feudal halls of the Orsini, now included among the numberless possessions of the banker Prince Torlonia.

“Walking on the battlements of this castle next morning” (May 10th)—says Mr. Cheney—“he spoke of Goethe with regret ; he had been in correspondence with him before his death, and had purposed visiting him at Weimar. I told him I had been to see Goethe the year before, and that I had found him well, and though very old, in perfect possession of all his faculties.—‘Of all his faculties!’ he replied ;—‘it is much

better to die than to survive them, and still better to die than live in the apprehension of it; but the worst of all,' he added, thoughtfully, 'would have been to have survived their partial loss, and yet to be conscious of his state.'—He did not seem to be, however, a great admirer of some of Goethe's works. Much of his popularity, he observed, was owing to pieces which, in his latter moments, he might have wished recalled. He spoke with much feeling. I answered, that *he* must derive great consolation in the reflection that his own popularity was owing to no such cause. He remained silent for a moment, with his eyes fixed on the ground; when he raised them, as he shook me by the hand, I perceived the light-blue eye sparkled with unusual moisture. He added—'I am drawing near to the close of my career; I am fast shuffling off the stage. I have been perhaps the most voluminous author of the day; and it *is* a comfort to me to think that I have tried to unsettle no man's faith, to corrupt no man's principle.'"

Next day, Friday, May 11th, Sir Walter left Rome. "During his stay there" (adds Mr. Cheney) "he had received every mark of attention and respect from the Italians, who, in not crowding to visit him, were deterred only by their delicacy and their dread of intruding on an invalid. The enthusiasm was by no means confined to the higher orders. His fame, and even his works, are familiar to all classes—the stalls are filled with translations of his novels in the cheapest forms; and some of the most popular plays and operas have been founded upon them. Some time after he left Italy, when I was travelling in the mountains of Tuscany, it has more than once occurred to me to be stopped in little villages, hardly accessible to carriages, by an eager admirer of Sir Walter, to inquire after the health of my illustrious countryman."

CHAPTER XVIII

Return to England—Seizure at Nimeguen—Jermyn Street, London—Edinburgh—Abbotsford—Death and Funeral of Scott in September, 1832.

THE last jotting of Sir Walter Scott's Diary—perhaps the last specimen of his handwriting—records his starting from Naples on April 16th. After May 11th the story can hardly be told too briefly.

The irritation of impatience, which had for a moment been suspended by the aspect and society of Rome, returned the moment he found himself again on the road, and seemed to increase hourly. His companions could with difficulty prevail on him to see even the falls of Terni, or the church of Santa Croce at Florence. On the 17th, a cold and dreary day, they passed the Apennines, and dined on the top of the mountains. The snow and the pines recalled Scotland, and he expressed pleasure at the sight of them. That night they reached Bologna, but he would see none of the interesting objects there;—and next day, hurrying in like manner through Ferrara, he proceeded as far as Monselice. On the 19th he arrived at Venice; and he remained there till the 23rd; but shewed no curiosity about anything except the Bridge of Sighs and the adjoining dungeons—down into which he would scramble, though the exertion was exceedingly painful to him. On the other historical features of that place—one so sure in other days to have inexhaustible attractions for him—he would not even look; and it was the same with all that he came within reach of—even with the fondly anticipated chapel at Inspruck—as they proceeded through the Tyrol, and so onwards, by Munich, Ulm, and Heidelberg, to Frankfort. Here (June 5th) he entered a bookseller's shop; and the people seeing an English party, brought out among the first things, a lithographed print of Abbotsford. He said—"I know that already, sir," and hastened back to the inn without being recognised. Though in some parts of the journey they had very severe weather, he repeatedly wished to travel all the night as well as all the day; and the symptoms of an approaching fit were so obvious, that he was more than once bled, ere they reached Mayence, by the hand of his affectionate domestic.

At this town they embarked, on June 8th, in the Rhine steam-boat; and while they descended the famous river through its most picturesque region, he seemed to enjoy, though he said nothing, the perhaps unrivalled scenery it presented to him. His eye was fixed on the successive crags and castles, and ruined monasteries, each of which had been celebrated in some German ballad familiar to his ear, and all of them blended in the immortal panorama of *Childe Harold*. But so soon as they had passed Cologne, and nothing but flat shores, and here and there a grove of poplars and a village spire were offered to the vision, the weight of misery sunk down again upon him. It was near Nimeguen, on the evening of the 9th, that he sustained

another serious attack of apoplexy, combined with paralysis. Nicolson's lancet restored, after the lapse of some minutes, the signs of animation ; but this was the crowning blow. Next day he insisted on resuming his journey, and on the 11th was lifted into an English steam-boat at Rotterdam.

He reached London about six o'clock on the evening of Wednesday, June 13th. Owing to the unexpected rapidity of the journey, his eldest daughter had had no notice when to expect him ; and fearful of finding her either out of town, or unprepared to receive him and his attendants under her roof, Charles Scott drove to the St. James's Hotel in Jermyn Street, and established his quarters there before he set out in quest of his sister and myself. When we reached the hotel, he recognised us with many marks of tenderness, but signified that he was totally exhausted ; so no attempt was made to remove him further, and he was put to bed immediately. Dr. Fergusson saw him the same night, and next day Sir Henry Halford and Dr. Holland saw him also ; and during the next three weeks the two latter visited him daily, while Fergusson was scarcely absent from his pillow. The Major was soon on the spot. To his children, all assembled once more about him, he repeatedly gave his blessing in a very solemn manner, as if expecting immediate death ; but he was never in a condition for conversation, and sank either into sleep or delirious stupor upon the slightest effort.

Mrs. Thomas Scott came to town as soon as she heard of his arrival, and remained to help us. She was more than once recognised and thanked. Mr. Cadell, too, arrived from Edinburgh, to render any assistance in his power. I think Sir Walter saw no other of his friends except Mr. John Richardson, and him only once. As usual, he woke up at the sound of a familiar voice, and made an attempt to put forth his hand, but it dropped powerless, and he said with a smile—"Excuse my hand." Richardson made a struggle to suppress his emotion, and, after a moment, got out something about Abbotsford and the woods, which he had happened to see shortly before. The eye brightened, and he said—"How does Kirklands get on ?" Mr. Richardson had lately purchased the estate so called in Teviotdale, and Sir Walter had left him busied with plans of building. His friend told him that his new house was begun, and that the Marquis of Lothian had very kindly lent him one of his own, meantime, in its vicinity. "Ay, Lord Lothian is a good man," said Sir Walter ; "he is a man from whom one may

receive a favour, and that's saying a good deal for any man in these days." The stupor then sank back upon him, and Richardson never heard his voice again. This state of things continued till the beginning of July.

During these melancholy weeks, great interest and sympathy were manifested. Allan Cunningham mentions that, walking home late one night, he found several working-men standing together at the corner of Jermyn Street, and one of them asked him—as if there was but one deathbed in London—"Do you know, sir, if this is the street where he is lying?" The inquiries both at the hotel and at my house were incessant; and I think there was hardly a member of the royal family who did not send every day. The newspapers teemed with paragraphs about Sir Walter; and one of these, it appears, threw out a suggestion that his travels had exhausted his pecuniary resources, and that if he were capable of reflection at all, cares of that sort might probably harass his pillow. This paragraph came from a very ill-informed, but, I dare say, a well-meaning quarter. It caught the attention of some members of the Government; and in consequence, I received a private communication, to the effect that, if the case were as stated, Sir Walter's family had only to say what sum would relieve him from embarrassment, and it would be immediately advanced by the Treasury. The then Paymaster of the Forces, Lord John Russell, had the delicacy to convey this message through a lady with whose friendship he knew us to be honoured—the Honourable Catherine Arden. We expressed our grateful sense of his politeness, and of the liberality of the Government, and I now beg leave to do so once more;—but his Lordship was of course informed that Sir Walter Scott was not situated as the journalist had represented.

On this his last journey, Sir Walter was attended by his two daughters, Mr. Cadell, and myself—and also by Dr. Thomas Watson, who (it being impossible for Dr. Fergusson to leave town at that moment) kindly undertook to see him safe at Abbotsford. We embarked in the *James Watt* steamboat, the master of which (Captain John Jamieson), as well as the agents of the proprietors, made every arrangement in their power for the convenience of the invalid. The Captain gave up for Sir Walter's use his own private cabin, which was a separate erection—a sort of cottage on the deck; and he seemed unconscious, after laid in bed there, that any new removal had occurred. On arriving at Newhaven, late on July

9th, we found careful preparations made for his landing by the manager of the Shipping Company (Mr. Hamilton)—and Sir Walter, prostrate in his carriage, was slung on shore, and conveyed from thence to Douglas's Hotel, in St. Andrew's Square, in the same complete apparent unconsciousness. Mrs. Douglas had in former days been the Duke of Buccleuch's housekeeper at Bowhill, and she and her husband had also made the most suitable provision.

At a very early hour on the morning of Wednesday, the 11th, we again placed him in his carriage, and he lay in the same torpid state during the first two stages on the road to Tweedside. But as we descended the vale of the Gala he began to gaze about him, and by degrees it was obvious that he was recognising the features of that familiar landscape. Presently he murmured a name or two—"Gala Water surely—Buckholm—Torwoodlee." As we rounded the hill at Ladhope, and the outline of the Eildons burst on him, he became greatly excited; and, when turning himself on the couch, his eye caught at length his own towers at the distance of a mile, he sprang up with a cry of delight. The river being in flood, we had to go round a few miles by Melrose bridge; and during the time this occupied, his woods and house being within prospect, it required occasionally both Dr. Watson's strength and mine, in addition to Nicolson's, to keep him in the carriage. After passing the bridge, the road for a couple of miles loses sight of Abbotsford, and he relapsed into his stupor; but on gaining the bank immediately above it, his excitement became again ungovernable.

Mr. Laidlaw was waiting at the porch, and assisted us in lifting him into the dining-room, where his bed had been prepared. He sat bewildered for a few moments, and then resting his eye on Laidlaw, said—"Ha! Willie Laidlaw! O man, how often have I thought of you!" By this time his dogs had assembled about his chair—they began to fawn upon him and lick his hands, and he alternately sobbed and smiled over them, until sleep oppressed him.

Dr. Watson having consulted on all things with Mr. Clarkson of Melrose and his father, the good old "Country Surgeon" of Selkirk, resigned the patient to them, and returned to London. None of them could have any hope, but that of soothing irritation. Recovery was no longer to be thought of: but there might be *Euthanasia*.

And yet something like a ray of hope did break in upon

us next morning. Sir Walter awoke perfectly conscious where he was, and expressed an ardent wish to be carried out into his garden. We procured a Bath chair from Huntley Burn, and Laidlaw and I wheeled him out before his door, and up and down for some time on the turf, and among the rose-beds then in full bloom. The grandchildren admired the new vehicle, and would be helping in their way to push it about. He sat in silence, smiling placidly on them and the dogs their companions, and now and then admiring the house, the screen of the garden, and the flowers and trees. By and by he conversed a little, very composedly, with us—said he was happy to be at home—that he felt better than he had ever done since he left it, and would perhaps disappoint the doctors after all. He then desired to be wheeled through his rooms, and we moved him leisurely for an hour or more up and down the hall and the great library :—"I have seen much," he kept saying, "but nothing like my ain house—give me one turn more !" He was gentle as an infant, and allowed himself to be put to bed again, the moment we told him that we thought he had had enough for one day.

Next morning he was still better. After again enjoying the Bath chair for perhaps a couple of hours out of doors, he desired to be drawn into the library, and placed by the central window, that he might look down upon the Tweed. Here he expressed a wish that I should read to him, and when I asked from what book, he said—"Need you ask ? There is but one." I chose the 14th chapter of St John's Gospel ; he listened with mild devotion, and said when I had done—"Well, this is a great comfort—I have followed you distinctly, and I feel as if I were yet to be myself again." In this placid frame he was again put to bed, and had many hours of soft slumber.

On the third day Mr. Laidlaw and I again wheeled him about the small piece of lawn and shrubbery in front of the house for some time ; and the weather being delightful, and all the richness of summer around him, he seemed to taste fully the balmy influences of nature. The sun getting very strong, we halted the chair in a shady corner, just within the verge of his verdant arcade around the court-wall ; and breathing the coolness of the spot, he said, "Read me some amusing thing—read me a bit of Crabbe." I brought out the first volume of his old favourite that I could lay hand on, and turned to what I remembered as one of his most favourite passages in it—the description of the arrival of the Players in the Borough. He

listened with great interest, and also, as I soon perceived, with great curiosity. Every now and then he exclaimed, "Capital—excellent—very good—Crabbe has lost nothing"—and we were too well satisfied that he considered himself as hearing a new production, when, chuckling over one couplet, he said, "Better and better—but how will poor Terry endure these cuts?" I went on with the poet's terrible sarcasms upon the theatrical life, and he listened eagerly, muttering, "Honest Dan!"—"Dan won't like this." At length I reached those lines—

"Sad happy race! soon raised and soon depressed,
Your days all passed in jeopardy and jest:
Poor without prudence, with afflictions vain,
Not warned by misery, nor enriched by gain."

"Shut the book," said Sir Walter—"I can't stand more of this—it will touch Terry to the very quick."

On the morning of Sunday, the 15th, he was again taken out into the little *pleasaunce*, and got as far as his favourite terrace-walk between the garden and the river, from which he seemed to survey the valley and the hills with much satisfaction. On re-entering the house, he desired me to read to him from the New Testament, and after that he again called for a little of Crabbe; but whatever I selected from that poet seemed to be listened to as if it made part of some new volume published while he was in Italy. He attended with this sense of novelty even to the tale of Phœbe Dawson, which not many months before he could have repeated every line of, and which I chose for one of these readings, because, as is known to every one, it had formed the last solace of Mr. Fox's death-bed. On the contrary, his recollection of whatever I read from the Bible appeared to be lively; and in the afternoon, when we made his grandson, a child of six years, repeat some of Dr. Watts' hymns by his chair, he seemed also to remember them perfectly. That evening he heard the Church service, and when I was about to close the book, said—"Why do you omit the visitation for the sick?"—which I added accordingly.

On Monday he remained in bed, and seemed extremely feeble; but after breakfast on Tuesday, the 17th, he appeared revived somewhat, and was again wheeled about on the turf. Presently he fell asleep in his chair, and after dozing for perhaps half an hour, started awake, and shaking the plaids we had put about him from off his shoulders, said—"This is sad idleness. I shall forget what I have been thinking of, if I don't set it

down now. Take me into my own room, and fetch the keys of my desk." He repeated this so earnestly, that we could not refuse; his daughters went into his study, opened his writing-desk, and laid paper and pens in the usual order, and I then moved him through the hall and into the spot where he had always been accustomed to work. When the chair was placed at the desk, and he found himself in the old position, he smiled and thanked us, and said—"Now give me my pen, and leave me for a little to myself." Sophia put the pen into his hand, and he endeavoured to close his fingers upon it, but they refused their office—it dropped on the paper. He sank back among his pillows, silent tears rolling down his cheeks; but composing himself by and by, motioned to me to wheel him out of doors again. Laidlaw met us at the porch, and took his turn of the chair. Sir Walter, after a little while, again dropped into slumber. When he was awaking, Laidlaw said to me—"Sir Walter has had a little repose." "No, Willie," said he, "no repose for Sir Walter but in the grave." The tears again rushed from his eyes. "Friends," said he, "don't let me expose myself—get me to bed—that's the only place."

With this scene ended our glimpse of daylight. Sir Walter never, I think, left his room afterwards, and hardly his bed, except for an hour or two in the middle of the day; and after another week he was unable even for this. During a few days he was in a state of painful irritation—and I saw realised all that he had himself prefigured in his description of the meeting between Chrystal Croftangry and his paralytic friend. Dr. Ross came out from Edinburgh, bringing with him his wife, one of the dearest *nieces* of the Clerks' table. Sir Walter with some difficulty recognised the doctor; but on hearing Mrs. Ross's voice, exclaimed at once—"Isn't that Kate Hume?" These kind friends remained for two or three days with us. Clarkson's lancet was pronounced necessary, and the relief it afforded was, I am happy to say, very effectual.

After this he declined daily, but still there was great strength to be wasted, and the process was long. He seemed, however, to suffer no bodily pain; and his mind, though hopelessly obscured, appeared, when there was any symptom of consciousness, to be dwelling, with rare exceptions, on serious and solemn things; the accent of the voice grave, sometimes awful, but never querulous, and very seldom indicative of any angry or resentful thoughts. Now and then he imagined himself to be administering justice as Sheriff; and once or twice he seemed

to be ordering Tom Purdie about trees. A few times also, I am sorry to say, we could perceive that his fancy was at Jedburgh—and *Burk Sir Walter* escaped him in a melancholy tone. But commonly whatever we could follow him in was a fragment of the Bible (especially the Prophecies of Isaiah and the Book of Job), or some petition in the litany, or a verse of some psalm (in the old Scotch metrical version), or of some of the magnificent hymns of the Romish ritual, in which he had always delighted, but which probably hung on his memory now in connexion with the Church services he had attended while in Italy. We very often heard distinctly the cadence of the *Dies Iræ*; and I think the very last *stanza* that we could make out, was the first of a still greater favourite :—

“Stabat Mater dolorosa,
Juxta crucem lachrymosa,
Dum pendebat Filius.”

All this time he continued to recognise his daughters, Laidlaw, and myself, whenever we spoke to him—and received every attention with a most touching thankfulness. Mr. Clarkson, too, was always saluted with the old courtesy, though the cloud opened but a moment for him to do so. Most truly might it be said that the gentleman survived the genius.

After two or three weeks had passed in this way, I was obliged to leave Sir Walter for a single day, and go into Edinburgh to transact business, on his account, with Mr. Henry Cockburn (now Lord Cockburn), then Solicitor-General for Scotland. The Scotch Reform Bill threw a great burden of new duties and responsibilities upon the Sheriffs; and Scott's Sheriff-substitute, the Laird of Raeburn, not having been regularly educated for the law, found himself unable to encounter these novelties, especially as regarded the registration of voters, and other details connected with the recent enlargement of the electoral franchise. Under such circumstances, as no one but the Sheriff could appoint another Substitute, it became necessary for Sir Walter's family to communicate the state he was in in a formal manner to the Law Officers of the Crown; and the Lord Advocate (Mr. Jeffrey), in consequence, introduced and carried through Parliament a short bill (2 and 3 William IV. cap. 101), authorising the Government to appoint a new Sheriff of Selkirkshire, “during the incapacity or non-resignation of Sir Walter Scott.” It was on this bill that the Solicitor-General had expressed a wish to converse with me: but there was little to be

said, as the temporary nature of the new appointment gave no occasion for any pecuniary question ; and, if that had been otherwise, the circumstances of the case would have rendered Sir Walter's family entirely indifferent upon such a subject. There can be no doubt, that if he had recovered in so far as to be capable of executing a resignation, the Government would have considered it just to reward thirty-two years' faithful services by a retired allowance equivalent to his salary—and as little, that the Government would have had sincere satisfaction in settling that matter in the shape most acceptable to himself. And perhaps (though I feel that it is scarcely worth while) I may as well here express my regret that a statement highly unjust and injurious should have found its way into the pages of some of Sir Walter's biographers. These writers have thought fit to insinuate that there was a want of courtesy and respect on the part of the Lord Advocate, and the other official persons connected with this arrangement. On the contrary, nothing could be more handsome and delicate than the whole of their conduct in it ; Mr. Cockburn could not have entered into the case with greater feeling and tenderness, had it concerned a brother of his own ; and when Mr. Jeffrey introduced his bill in the House of Commons, he used language so graceful and touching, that both Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Croker went across the House to thank him cordially for it.

Perceiving, towards the close of August, that the end was near, and thinking it very likely that Abbotsford might soon undergo many changes, and myself, at all events, never see it again, I felt a desire to have some image preserved of the interior apartments as occupied by their founder, and invited from Edinburgh for that purpose Sir Walter's dear friend, Sir William Allan—whose presence, I well knew, would even under the circumstances of that time be nowise troublesome to any of the family, but the contrary in all respects. Sir William willingly complied, and executed a series of beautiful drawings. He also shared our watchings, and witnessed all but the last moments. Sir Walter's cousins, the ladies of Ashestiel, came down frequently, for a day or two at a time, and did whatever sisterly affection could prompt, both for the sufferer and his daughters. Miss Mary Scott (daughter of his uncle Thomas), and Mrs. Scott of Harden, did the like.

As I was dressing on the morning of Monday, September 17th, Nicolson came into my room, and told me that his master had awoke in a state of composure and consciousness, and wished

to see me immediately. I found him entirely himself, though in the last extreme of feebleness. His eye was clear and calm—every trace of the wild fire of delirium extinguished. "Lockhart," he said, "I may have but a minute to speak to you. My dear, be a good man—be virtuous—be religious—be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here." He paused, and I said—"Shall I send for Sophia and Anne?" "No," said he, "don't disturb them. Poor souls! I know they were up all night—God bless you all." With this he sunk into a very tranquil sleep, and, indeed, he scarcely afterwards gave any sign of consciousness, except for an instant on the arrival of his sons.

They, on learning that the scene was about to close, obtained anew leave of absence from their posts, and both reached Abbotsford on the 19th. About half-past one p.m. on September 21st, Sir Walter breathed his last, in the presence of all his children. It was a beautiful day—so warm, that every window was wide open—and so perfectly still, that the sound of all others most delicious to his ear, the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles, was distinctly audible as we knelt around the bed, and his eldest son kissed and closed his eyes. No sculptor ever modelled a more majestic image of repose.

Almost every newspaper that announced this event in Scotland, and many in England, had the signs of mourning usual on the demise of a king. With hardly an exception, the voice was that of universal, unmixed grief and veneration.

It was considered due to Sir Walter's physicians, and to the public, that the nature of his malady should be distinctly ascertained. The result was, that there appeared the traces of a very slight mollification in one part of the substance of the brain.

His funeral was conducted in an unostentatious manner, but the attendance was very great. Few of his old friends then in Scotland were absent,—and many, both friends and strangers, came from a great distance. His domestics and foresters made it their petition that no hireling hand might assist in carrying his remains. They themselves bore the coffin to the hearse, and from the hearse to the grave. The pall-bearers were his sons, his son-in-law, and his little grandson; his cousins, Charles Scott of Nesbitt, James Scott of Jedburgh (sons to his uncle Thomas), William Scott of Raeburn, Robert Rutherford, Clerk to the Signet, Colonel (now Lieut.-General Sir James) Russell of Ashestiel, William Keith (brother to Sir Alexander Keith of

Ravelstone) ; and the chief of his family, Hugh Scott of Harden, afterwards Lord Polwarth.

When the company were assembled, according to the usual Scotch fashion, prayers were offered up by the Very Reverend Dr. Baird, Principal of the University of Edinburgh, and by the Reverend Dr. David Dickson, Minister of St. Cuthbert's, who both expatiated in a very striking manner on the virtuous example of the deceased.

The court-yard and all the precincts of Abbotsford were crowded with uncovered spectators as the procession was arranged ; and as it advanced through Darnick and Melrose, and the adjacent villages, the whole population appeared at their doors in like manner—almost all in black. The train of carriages extended, I understand, over more than a mile ; the yeomanry followed in great numbers on horseback ; and it was late in the day ere we reached Dryburgh. Some accident, it was observed, had caused the hearse to halt for several minutes on the summit of the hill at Bemerside—exactly where a prospect of remarkable richness opens, and where Sir Walter had always been accustomed to rein up his horse. The day was dark and lowering, and the wind high.

The wide enclosure of the Abbey of Dryburgh was thronged with old and young ; and when the coffin was taken from the hearse, and again laid on the shoulders of the afflicted serving-men, one deep sob burst from a thousand lips. Mr. Archdeacon Williams read the Burial Service of the Church of England ; and thus, about half-past five o'clock in the evening of Wednesday, September 26th, 1832, the remains of Sir Walter Scott were laid by the side of his wife in the sepulchre of his ancestors—*"in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body that it may be like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself."*

In the winter succeeding the Poet's death, his sons and myself, as his executors, endeavoured to make such arrangements as were within our power for completing the great object of his own wishes and fatal exertions. We found the remaining principal sum of commerical debt to be nearly £54,000. £22,000 had been insured upon his life ; there were some moneys in the hands of the Trustees, and Mr. Cadell very handsomely offered to advance to us the balance, about £30,000, that we might without further delay settle with the

body of creditors. This was effected accordingly on February 2nd, 1833; Mr. Cadell accepting as his only security, the right to the profits accruing from Sir Walter's copyright property and literary remains, until such time as this new and consolidated obligation should be discharged. Besides his commercial debt, Sir Walter left also one of £10,000, contracted by himself as an individual, when struggling to support Constable in December, 1825, and secured by mortgage on the lands of Abbotsford. And, lastly, the library and museum, presented to him in free gift by his creditors in December, 1830, were bequeathed to his eldest son with a burden to the extent of £5,000, which sum he designed to be divided between his younger children, as already explained in an extract from his Diary. His will provided that the produce of his literary property, in case of its proving sufficient to wipe out the remaining debt of the firm, should then be applied to the extinction of these mortgages; and thereafter, should this also be accomplished, divided equally among his surviving family.

CHRONOLOGY

A.D.	AGE	
1771		Sir Walter Scott born on August 15th.
1785	14	Apprenticed to his father as Writer to the Signet.
1792	21	Called to the Scottish Bar in July.
1796	25	Publishes Ballads after Bürger.
1797	26	Married to Miss Carpenter at Christmas.
1798	27	Occupies a cottage at Lasswade.
1799	28	First visit to London since infancy.
1799		Death of Scott's father.
1799		Publishes "Goetz of Berlichingen."
1799		"The House of Aspen: a Tragedy."
1799		Ballad of "Glen Finlas."
1799		Ballad of "Eve of St. John."
1799		Ballad of "The Grey Brothers."
1799		Ballad of "The Fire King," from the German.
1799		Origin of connexion with Ballantyne as printer.
1799		Appointed Sheriff of Selkirkshire, December 16th.
1802	31	"Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," vols. i. and ii.
1803	32	"Minstrelsy," vol. iii.
1803		Reviews in <i>Edinburgh</i> —(a) "Amadis of Gaul"; (b) Sibbald's "Chronicle"; (c) Godwin's "Chaucer"; (d) Ellis's "Ancient English Poetry"; (e) "Chatterton."
1804	33	Publishes "Sir Tristrem," on May 2nd.
1804		Visited by Wordsworth.
1804		Purchase of Ashestiel and removal there.
1805	34	Publishes "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" in first week of January.
1805		Partnership with James Ballantyne begins.
1805		Reviews—(a) Todd's "Spenser"; (b) Godwin's "Fleetwood"; (c) "Ossian"; (d) "Froissart"; (e) Thornton's "Sporting Tour"; (f) "Cookery."
1805		Song, "The Bard's Incantation."
1806	35	Appointed Clerk of Session on March 8th.
1806		Reviews—(a) Herbert's Poems; (b) "Metrical Romances"; (c) "Miseries of Human Life."

A. D.	AGE	
1806	35	Ballads and Lyrical Pieces.
1806		Kingsley's and Hodgson's "Memoirs."
1808	37	"Marmion" published in middle of January.
1808		"Life and Works of Dryden."
1808		Strutt's "Queenhoo Hall," a Romance.
1808		Carleton's "Memoirs."
1808		"Monmouth Memoirs."
1809	38	Somers' "Tracts."
1809		Reviews—(a) Cromek's "Reliques of Burns"; (b) "Chronicle of the Cid"; (c) Carr's "Tour."
1809		Sadler's "Life, Letters and State Papers."
1810	39	"English Minstrelsy."
1810		"The Lady of the Lake."
1810		Miss Seward's "Life."
1810		Essay on "Scottish Judicature."
1811	40	"Vision of Don Roderick."
1811		Purchase of Abbotsford, and removal from Ashestiel.
1811		"Imitations."
1811		"Secret History of the Court of King James I."
1812	41	"Rokeby."
1813	42	"The Bridal of Triermain."
1813		Declines the Poet-Laureateship, and recommends Southey.
1814	43	"The Eyrbyggja Saga."
1814		"Swift's Life and Works."
1814		"Waverley."
1814		Essay on "Chivalry."
1814		Essay on "The Drama."
1814		"Memories of the Somervilles."
1814		Rowland's "The letting of humours blood in the head vaine."
1815	44	Meeting with Byron at John Murray's.
1815		"The Lord of the Isles."
1815		"Guy Mannering."
1815		"The Field of Waterloo."
1815		Song, "On lifting up the Banner."
1815		Excursion to Paris.
1816	45	"Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk."
1816		"The Antiquary."
1816		"Edinburgh Annual Register for 1814."
1816		"Tales of My Landlord," First Series: "The Black Dwarf" and "Old Mortality."
1817	46	"Harold the Dauntless."
1817		"The Sultan of Serendib."
1817		Kemble's "Farewell Address."
1817		"Edinburgh Annual Register for 1815."
1817		Introduction to the "Border Antiquities."
1817		Song, "The Sun upon the Wierdlaw Hill."
1817		"Rob Roy."
1818	47	"Scottish Regalia."
1818		Reviews—(a) Kirkston's "Church History"; (b) Mrs. Shelley's "Frankenstein."

A.D.	AGE	
1818	47	Ballad "The Battle of Sempach."
1818		"Tales of My Landlord," Second Series: "The Heart of Mid-Lothian."
1818		Reviews—(a) Gourgaud's "Narratives"; (b) Maturin's "Woman, or Pour et Contre"; (c) "Childe Harold, Canto IV."
1818		Article for Captain Burt's "Letters."
1818		"Provincial Antiquities of Scotland."
1818		Sale of Copyrights to Constable for £12,000.
1819	48	Ballad of "The Noble Moringer."
1819		"Charles, Duke of Buccleuch."
1819		"Tales of My Landlord," Third Series: "Bride of Lammermoor" and "Legend of Montrose."
1819		"Memorials of the Haliburtons."
1819		Carey's "Trivial Poems and Triolets."
1819		"Ivanhoe."
1820	49	"The Visionary."
1820		"The Monastery."
1820		"The Abbot."
1820		"Lives of the Novelists."
1820		Baronetcy conferred upon Scott on March 30th.
1820		Elected President of the Royal Society.
1821	50	"Kenilworth."
1821		"Account of Coronation of King George IV."
1821		Franck's "Northern Memoirs—The Contemplative Angler."
1821		"Diary of Lord Fountainhall."
1821		"The Pirate."
1821		Second sale of copyrights—5,000 guineas.
1822	51	Gwynne's "Memoirs of the Civil Wars."
1822		"Halidon Hill."
1822		"Macduff's Cross."
1822		"The Fortunes of Nigel."
1822		"Poetry contained in the Waverley Novels."
1822		Visit of George IV. to Edinburgh.
1823	52	"Peveril of the Peak."
1823		"Quentin Durward."
1823		Essay on "Romance."
1823		"St. Ronan's Well."
1823		Third sale of copyrights—5,000 guineas.
1824	53	"Redgauntlet."
1824		"Swift," second edition.
1824		"Lord Byron."
1825	54	Sir Walter's eldest son married.
1825		"Tales of the Crusaders": "The Betrothal," "The Talisman."
1825		Introduction to "Memoirs of Madame Larochejaquelin."
1825		Review—Pepys' "Diary."
1826	55	"Letters of Malachi Malagrowther."
1826		"Woodstock."
1826		Review of "Life of Kemble" and Kelly's "Reminiscences."

A. D.	AGE.	
1826	55	Review of Galt's "Omon."
1826		January 17th—Financial downfall of the house of Hurst, Constable, and Ballantyne, in which Sir Walter was involved.
1826		Death of Lady Scott.
1827	56	Review of Mackenzie's "Life and Works of John Home."
1827		Review of Hoffman's Novels.
1827		"Life of Napoleon Buonaparte."
1827		"Chronicles of the Canongate," First Series: "The Two Drovers," "The Highland Widow," "The Surgeon's Daughter."
1827		"Miscellaneous Prose Works" first collected, 6 vols.
1827		Essay on "The Planting of Waste Lands."
1827		Essay on "Ornamental Gardening."
1827		"Reply to General Gourgaud."
1827		"Memoirs of George Bannatyne."
1827		"Tales of a Grandfather," First Series.
1828	57	Essay on "Molière."
1828		"Two Religious Discourses."
1828		"Chronicles of the Canongate," Second Series: "The Fair Maid of Perth."
1828		"Tales of a Grandfather," Second Series.
1828		Review of "Hajji Baba in England."
1828		Review of Sir Humphry Davy's "Salmonia."
1829	58	"Anne of Geierstein."
1829		History of Scotland for Lardner's "Cyclopædia," Vol. I.
1829		"Tales of a Grandfather," Third Series.
1829		"Waverley Novels, with New Introductions and Notes."
1830	59	Sir Walter suffers from apoplectic paralysis.
1830		Resignation of Clerkship of Session.
1830		Sir Walter declines the office of Privy Councillor.
1830		Review of Pitcairn's "Ancient Criminal Trials."
1830		"The Doom of Devorgoil" and "Auchindrane."
1830		Essays on "Ballad Poetry."
1830		"Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft."
1830		"Tales of a Grandfather," Fourth Series: "History of France."
1830		History of Scotland for Lardner's "Cyclopædia," Vol. II.
1830		Review of Southey's "Life of John Bunyan."
1831	60	"Tales of My Landlord," Fourth Series: "Count Robert of Paris" and "Castle Dangerous."
1831		Apoplectic seizure.
1831		Excursion to Italy.
1831		Sir Walter erects the monument at grave of Jeanie Deans.
1832	61	Illness in London, when returning from Italy.
1832		Sir Walter dies at Abbotsford on September 21st.
1832		Burial of Sir Walter at the Abbey of Dryburgh on September 26th.

APPENDIX

JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART

JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART, in common with James Boswell, was a great biographer, but hardly a great man. His genius was limited in its range and power. In an age of pigmies he would have been a giant ; in an age of giants he looked but a man of gifts and parts.

Born in 1794, Lockhart was Scott's junior by twenty-three years, Carlyle's senior by one year, while Burns died at Dumfries when he was a toddling baby of two summers. He was a son of the manse—that cradle of scholars since the Reformation. His father, who was the son of the laird of Birkhill, in Lanarkshire, was minister of the parish of Cambusnethan, in his ancestral county. His grandfather on the maternal side was also an eminent divine ; and his grandmother on the same side was the daughter of Henry Erskine, third Lord Cardross. Lockhart's descent has been traced back as far as James Nimmo, the Covenanter. He had inherited some of the best blood of the Scottish Lowlands.

Lockhart's health was never robust, and an illness in childhood had left him slightly deaf. He matriculated, however, as a student in the University of Glasgow at the singularly early age of twelve, where he gained the Blackstone Scholarship in Greek, and was ultimately elected to a Snell Exhibition at Balliol College, Oxford. In 1813 he retired from Oxford with a first class in Classics. Three years later, he was called to the Scottish Bar, but "briefs" were not in his way, for literature was more alluring than law. He visited Goethe at Weimar, and made himself master of the modern languages. When *Blackwood's Magazine* was established in 1817, Lockhart became one of the regular contributors under various pseudonyms. He was an incisive and irritating satirist, and had both pencil and pen at his command. He entered *con amore* into the war of rival editors by which the empire of taste in letters was conquered for us in those days when the tomahawk was

the accredited weapon of literary criticism. Lockhart, from 1817 to 1825, was the most brilliant of the younger contributors to *Blackwood*. He was tall, handsome, slender, with the tight lips of a satirist and the mobile chin of the good-natured companion, while his hair fell about his temples in huge masses of black. In politics he was a Tory of the Tories, but his truculent intolerance was rather acquired through environment than native to his heart; for he was a lover of man, and most at home "by the shores of old romance."

In May, 1818, Lockhart was introduced to Sir Walter Scott, and invited to Abbotsford. Two years later he married Sophia, Scott's eldest daughter, and settled in the cottage at Chiefswood on the Abbotsford estate. After five years of continuous literary work in Edinburgh, which was accompanied by rare opportunities of intercourse with Scott, he was appointed editor of Murray's *Quarterly Review*, at a salary of £1,000 a year. He then migrated to London, residing first in Pall Mall; afterwards, and practically for the rest of his life, in Sussex Place, Regent's Park.

In 1820-21 Lockhart was gravely involved in the duel which was fought with pistols between Jonathan H. Christie and John Scott. "The mother of mischief" was in her most savage moods then, and the fight between the cockney authors and the Edinburgh critics was the literary scandal of the time. In *Baldwin's Magazine*, John Scott, who was an Aberdonian, charged Lockhart personally with the editorial responsibility for the savage manners of *Blackwood*. Lockhart came to London and demanded an apology or satisfaction. Scott shuffled, and insisted upon "yes" or "no." Lockhart gave him "no" so far as the *Blackwood* editorship was concerned, for Wilson was the editor; and returned to Edinburgh, leaving his Oxford college friend, Christie, to conclude the negotiations with Scott. In a letter to Scott, Christie inserted a sentence which kindled Scott's wrath, and caused him to demand an apology. The duel followed at Chalk Farm on February 21st, 1821. Scott was mortally wounded, and died within six days. At the trial Christie was acquitted. It has been commonly believed that Lockhart got out of the quarrel with Scott in a cowardly fashion, and left Christie to do the fighting, but the entire evidence, as now collected, tends to exonerate Lockhart from direct guilt, while showing that Christie was dragged into the affair in cold blood, without malice against Scott, entirely for Lockhart's sake. This barbarous incident threw the shadow of terror upon Lockhart's inner life. He might well leave the sum of £100 in his will to Christie—*veteris haud immemor amicitiae*.

Lockhart's most important published works were: *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk*, 1819—a political satire; *Adam Blair*—a satire of the kirk; *Valerius, a Roman Story*, 1820; *Reginald Dalton* (novel), 1823; *Matthew Wald* (novel), 1824; *Life and*

Letters of Burns, 1828—written for *Constable's Miscellany*; and the *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, 1837-38, which is commonly pronounced to be "next to Boswell's 'Johnson,' the best in the language." Lockhart handed over all the profits accruing from his *Life of Scott* to Sir Walter's creditors. His translation of *Spanish Ballads* also gave him rank among the poets of his day.

In private life, Lockhart was the best of good fellows. He was seldom without a cigar in his mouth. Reserved to strangers, he was full of genial gush in the circle of his trusted intimates, and contributed to the amusement of the company by his rare gift of caricature. Himself a child in malice, he loved children, and was never so happy as when holding a baby in his arms. The death of his wife in 1837 left him a lone man walking among shadows. He withdrew from society overmuch, grew old prematurely, and lost his eyesight. In 1853 he retired from the editorship of the *Quarterly*, and, after travelling for some months in Italy, returned to Abbotsford, which was occupied by his daughter and son-in-law. On November 25th, 1854, he died in the room adjoining the death-room of Sir Walter Scott. He was buried by his desire in Dryburgh Abbey, "at the feet of Sir Walter Scott, within hearing of the Tweed."

The personal life of Lockhart was a record of continuous outward success. He was the child of comfort. The financial misfortunes at Abbotsford entailed no serious privations upon him. In 1843 he was appointed auditor of the Duchy of Lancaster at a salary of £400 a year. He was one of Thomas Carlyle's friends in London in the 'forties; and it was to Carlyle he first disclosed the serious side of his complex temperament by sending him in 1842, at the death of Carlyle's mother-in-law, the four best stanzas of the poem on immortality, which was published entire in the *Scotsman* newspaper in 1863:—

"When youthful hope has fled
Of loving take thy leave;
Be constant to the dead—
The dead cannot deceive.

Sweet modest flowers of spring,
How fleet your balmy day!
And man's brief year can bring
No secondary May—

No earthly burst again
Of gladness out of gloom,
Fond hope and vision vain,
Ungrateful to the tomb.

But 'tis an old belief
That on some solemn shore,
Beyond the sphere of grief,
Dear friends shall meet once more—

Beyond the sphere of time,
And sin and fate's control,
Serene in changeless prime
Of body and of soul.

That creed I fain would keep,
That hope I'll not forego;
Eternal be the sleep,
Unless to waken so."

By this solitary poem on immortality, composed in June, 1841, four years after his wife's death, when, according to his friend Mrs. Norton, "some good angel must have caught him in a trap," by his *Life of Burns*, and pre-eminently by his *Life of Scott*, the name of John Gibson Lockhart will be remembered as long as English literature may endure.

NOTES

AFTER the death of Sir Walter Scott in 1832, there was only one person living who could be his biographer, viz., his son-in-law and literary executor, John Gibson Lockhart. The *Life* was published in seven volumes; the first six volumes in 1837, and the seventh in 1838. In the Preface to the first volume, Lockhart stated that he had made some progress with a narrative of Scott's personal history, "in obedience to the instructions of Sir Walter's last will," when the discovery of the fragment of autobiography caused him to modify his plans. The work was entitled *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott*, but the edition which Lockhart abridged for Cadell in 1848 bore the title of *Life*, etc. The original *Memoirs* were published by Cadell, who had been Sir Walter's personal friend, and dedicated to another most devoted friend, Mr. J. B. S. Morritt, of Rokeby Park. For frontispiece, the first volume was embellished with Raeburn's first portrait of Scott, painted in 1808, the well-known portrait which passed ultimately into the family of the Duke of Buccleuch. Of this portrait, Dr. John Brown writes thus in his sketch of Sir Henry Raeburn: "Then there is Scott, sitting on ruins, his dog Camp—the English bull-terrier on whose death-day he wrote saying he could not dine out, because 'a very dear friend' had died—at his feet; the stern old keep of Hermitage in the distance—was there ever a more poetic picture of a poet?"

P. 4. *An acceptable companion, etc.*—Scott, in a note, stated that his grandfather was a fine alert figure, and wore a jockey cap over his grey hair.

P. 6. *The late Mrs. Cockburn.*—This lady was the authoress of the beautiful song—

"I have seen the smiling
Of fortune beguiling."

P. 8. *My brother, Thomas Scott, etc.*—Sir Walter described this brother as "a man of infinite humour and excellent parts." He died in Canada.

P. 17. *A brighter figure in the yards than in the class.*—"I never was a dunce," Scott added in a note, "nor thought to be so, but an incorrigibly idle imp, who was always longing to do something else than what was enjoined him."

P. 28. *As for Burns, etc.*—"All that Burns said to Scott," wrote George Gilfillan in his *Life of Burns*, "after his modest interference, was 'Ye'll be a man yet,' but it fell like a drop of poetic baptism on his brow."

P. 66. *Most remarkable man.*—Hogg, after reading the third volume of the *Minstrelsy*, imagined he could do better work himself in the same line. He set about imitating the manner of the ancients himself, and submitted the result to Scott, whose tolerance of the Shepherd was kindly always.

P. 74. *Scott sold Rosebank, etc.*—This valuable property was bequeathed to Scott by his uncle, Captain Robert Scott. It was too near the village of Kelso to be sufficiently a country residence for Sir Walter, who sold it on this account, and in order to buy "a mountain farm with the purchase money, and be quite the Laird of the Cairn and the Scaur."

P. 74. *Ashestiel will be visited, etc.*—It was here Scott engaged Tom Purdie, who became his steward on the lands of Abbotsford; also Peter Mathieson, Tom's brother-in-law, who was Scott's faithful coachman. Scott first met Tom Purdie as Sheriff. Tom was accused of poaching, and his circumstances, which were described with "odd, sly humour," moved Scott's heart, with the result that he took Tom into his service at Ashestiel.

P. 130. *John Ballantyne's missives.*—Alluding to Scott's connexion with the Ballantynes, when he "embarked largely in trade," Carlyle remarks in his *Essay on Scott*, that this portion of Scott's biography seems somewhat incongruous only to those who regard Scott "in the heroic light, and will have *Vates* to signify Prophet as well as Poet! . . . The practical Scott, looking towards practical issues in all things, could not but find hard cash one of the most practical. . . . A printing and bookselling business was not so alien for a maker of books."

P. 248. *Meantime, the progress of Abbotsford, etc.*—In the Essay quoted above, Carlyle, who was himself much in Edinburgh and the Border country from 1819 to 1825, remarks that "Abbotsford became infested to a great degree with tourists, wonder-hunters, and all that fatal species of people. . . . As many as sixteen parties have arrived at Abbotsford in one day; male and female; peers, Socinian preachers, whatsoever was distinguished, whatsoever had love of distinction in it! . . . A fatal species!"

P. 269. *These last advances, etc.*—Lockhart had removed to London in 1825 as editor of Murray's *Quarterly Review*. Scott's letters to him in the financial crisis, like the entries in his Diary, are most pathetic. "Poor Will Laidlaw!—poor Tom Purdie!" Scott exclaims in a letter to Lockhart, "such news will wring your hearts, and many a poor fellow's besides, to whom my prosperity was daily bread."

P. 332. *Before quitting home, etc.*—The monument to Helen Walker rests upon the grave of the humble heroine in the beautiful churchyard of Irongray, on the banks of the Cluden, six miles from Dumfries. The architect who executed Scott's commission was Mr. William Burn, Edinburgh. Scott's epitaph was as follows:—

" This stone was erected
by the Author of *Waverley*
to the memory
of
HELEN WALKER,
who died in the year of God 1791.
This humble individual
practised in real life
the virtues
with which fiction has invested
the imaginary character of
Jeanie Deans;
refusing the slightest departure
from veracity,
even to save the life of a sister,
she nevertheless showed her
kindness and fortitude,
In rescuing her from the severity of the law,
at the expense of personal exertions
which the time rendered as difficult
as the motive was laudable.
Respect the grave of poverty
when combined with love of truth
and dear affection."

The grave of Jeanie Deans is visited by many thousands every year. It is on the most direct road to Carlyle's Craigenputtock. The church of Irongray is of historical note. John Welsh, the Covenanter, was ejected from the living in 1662. "A. K. H. B." (Dr. Boyd) was minister of Irongray before his promotion to St. Andrews.

P. 347. Scott was survived by several of his most attached friends, although James Ballantyne was already on his death-bed when he heard of Scott's death. James Hogg died in 1835; William Laidlaw in 1845; Mr. Morritt in 1843.

P. 347. Sir Walter Scott's family consisted of two daughters and two sons—Mrs. Lockhart (Sophia), who died in 1837; Anne Scott, who survived her father but a year, and died in 1833. Both daughters died in London, and were buried in the New Cemetery in the Harrow Road. Lockhart remarks of Sophia, his wife, that "of all the race she most resembled her father in countenance, in temper, and in manners." Sir Walter's eldest son, called Walter, was an officer in the army, and died in 1847. He had no heir, consequently the baronetcy expired. Abbotsford belongs to the Hope-Scotts, the descendants of the Lockhart-Scott family. Charles Scott, Sir Walter's second son, was a clerk in the Foreign Office. His health was never robust, and he died in 1841.

P. 348. Lockhart relates how on lifting up Sir Walter's desk (after his death), his relatives found arranged in careful order a series of little objects, which had obviously been so placed there that his eye might rest on them every morning before he began his tasks—little boxes from his mother's bedroom; the silver taper-stand which the young advocate had bought for his mother with his first five-guinea fee: a row of small packets inscribed with her hand, and containing the hair of those of her offspring that had died before her; his father's snuff-box and etui-case, etc.

SCOTT MONUMENTS

ABBOTSFORD is the chief of Scott monuments. Soon after Sir Walter died, the sum of £10,000 was raised for a monument, but part of it was embezzled by the young secretary, who fled to America with it, where he soon afterwards died. The balance, which amounted to between £7,000 and £8,000, was used to liquidate the debt upon the library and museum at Abbotsford, and to help to reduce the mortgage on the estate, in order that "the house and its immediate appurtenances" might be preserved "as a memorial of the tastes and habits of the founder." After the death of Scott's son and heir—the second Sir Walter—in 1847, Mr. Cadell relieved the executors of all his further claims upon Abbotsford, by accepting in lieu of the same the transference of the family inheritance in Scott's books. In May, 1847, Abbotsford became free of debt, and the property of the heirs of Sir Walter. In 1848, Mr. Lockhart, to whom Abbotsford then practically belonged, wrote these words in the conclusion to the first edition of the abridged *Life*:—"The rental is small, but I hope and trust that as long as any of the blood remains, reverent care will attend over the guardianship of a possession associated with so many high and noble recollections."

Abbotsford is most conveniently visited from the picturesque Border town of Melrose.

Soon after Sir Walter's death, Edinburgh also raised the sum of £15,000 for a Scott monument. The result was the unique Scott Monument in Princes Street, in "Edina, Scotland's darling seat," as Burns described it, in Scott's "own romantic town." The foundation stone of this magnificent poem in masonry was laid in 1840. It consists of a Gothic aisle, surmounted by a spire. The architect was a Mr. Kemp. It contains a marble statue of Sir Walter, which is placed in the arched aisle, from the chisel of Mr. Steele.

Glasgow subscribed the sum of £1,200 in 1832 for a Scott

monument, which assumed the form of the lofty pillar and statue of Sir Walter erected in George's Square in that city.

The Borderers set up an interesting monument in the market-place of Selkirk, consisting of a statue in freestone by Mr. A. Ritchie, Musselburgh, bearing this inscription:—

“ Erected in August, 1839,
in proud and affectionate remembrance
of
SIR WALTER SCOTT, BARONET,
Sheriff of this County
from 1800 to 1832.

By Yarrow's stream still let me stray,
Though none should guide my feeble way;
Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
Although it chill my withered cheek.”

The inscriptions on the tomb in Dryburgh Abbey are merely of name and date.

PORTRAITS

THE Raeburn of 1808 is the most speaking portrait of Sir Walter.

The Lawrence portrait, painted for King George IV. in 1820, and in the corridor at Windsor Castle, shows Sir Walter as he was when at the zenith of his powers and fame.

The familiar head of Scott was painted by Thomas Phillips, R.A., in 1818, for John Murray; also in the same year by Geddes.

Newton, Leslie, Knight Gilbert, Watson Gordon, Grant, Sir David Wilkie, Sir Edwin Landseer, all painted Scott in one form or another. No other great writer has been so much painted. The marble bust by Sir Francis Chantrey, in 1820, a fixture in the library at Abbotsford, was described by Lockhart as “inimitable.”

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